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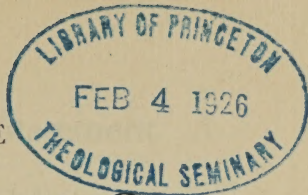
Presbyterian Church in the  
U.S.

The book of church order of  
the Presbyterian Church in









THE

# Book of Church Order

OF THE

Presbyterian Church

IN THE

United States

REVISED EDITION

1925

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RICHMOND, VA.

PRESBYTERIAN COMMITTEE OF PUBLICATION



# Historical Statement

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Our Book of Church Order has a long and notable line of ancestors. John Calvin wrote the first modern Presbyterian Book of Order for the church at Geneva in 1542.

John Knox sat at the feet of John Calvin for several years, and then returned to Scotland and wrote the "First Book of Discipline" for the Presbyterian Church of Scotland, in 1560. The whole history of Presbyterian church government in Scotland goes back to this First Book of Discipline.

The Westminster Assembly, which met in London in 1643, wrote not only our Confession of Faith and Catechisms, but also "The Form of Presbyterian Church Government." The Presbyterian Churches of England, Scotland, and Ireland adopted this Westminster Form of Government.

When our Presbyterian forefathers came to America they brought with them the Westminster "Form of Presbyterian Church Government," and it became the basis of Church law in the American Presbyterian Church.

The first General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in America was organized in 1789. The General Synod in preparing for the organization of the General Assembly practically re-wrote The Form of Presbyterian Church Government in 1788, in order to adjust it to the conditions in America. This new book was called "The Form of Government and Discipline of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America." It was revised a number of times prior to 1861, when the Southern Presbyterians withdrew and formed The Presbyterian Church in the United States.

When the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the United States was organized on December 4, 1861, it adopted the Form of Government and Discipline which had been in use since 1788. In 1863 our General Assembly took steps to revise this Form of Government and Discipline with the result that a thoroughgoing revision was adopted in 1879. A great many amendments were added during the next forty years.

In 1921 our General Assembly took steps to revise our Book of Church Order again.

Another thoroughgoing revision was proposed by the Committee on Revision, adopted by the General Assembly, approved by a large majority of the Presbyteries, and enacted into law by the General Assembly of 1925.

While our present Book of Church Order is the result of numerous revisions, it still contains many phrases, sentences, and paragraphs which are found in The Form of Government and Discipline of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America, which was first adopted in 1788.

This brief sketch shows that our Book of Church Order goes back through a long and noble line of ancestors to the days of John Calvin. We also believe that in its basic principles it goes back to the Holy Scriptures.



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 RULES OF PARLIAMENTARY  
ORDER

PART I.  
Form of Government





# PART I.

## Form of Government

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### CHAPTER I.

#### THE DOCTRINE OF CHURCH GOVERNMENT.

1. The scriptural form of Church government, which is that of Presbytery, is comprehended under five heads, namely: 1. The Church; 2. Its Members; 3. Its Officers; 4. Its Courts; and 5. Its Orders.

2. The Church which the Lord Jesus Christ has erected in this world for the gathering and perfecting of the saints, is his visible kingdom of grace, and is one and the same in all ages.

3. The members of this visible Church catholic are all those persons in every nation, together with their children, who make profession of the holy religion of Christ, and of submission to his laws.

4. The officers of the Church, by whom all its powers are administered, are, accord-

ing to the Scriptures, Ministers of the Word, Ruling Elders, and Deacons.

5. Ecclesiastical jurisdiction is not a several, but a joint power, to be exercised by Presbyters in courts. These courts may have jurisdiction over one or many churches, but they sustain such mutual relations as to realize the idea of the unity of the Church.

6. The ordination of officers is ordinarily by a court.

7. This scriptural doctrine of Presbytery is necessary to the perfection of the order of the visible Church, but is not essential to its existence.

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## CHAPTER II.

### THE KING AND HEAD OF THE CHURCH

8. Jesus Christ, upon whose shoulders the government is, whose name is called Wonderful, Counsellor, the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace; of the increase of whose government and peace there shall be no end; who sits upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom

to order it and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth, even for ever; having all power given unto him in heaven and in earth by the Father, who raised him from the dead, and set him on his own right hand, far above all principality and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come, and hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the Head over all things to the Church, which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all; he, being ascended up far above all heavens, that he might fill all things, received gifts for his Church, and gave all officers necessary for the edification of his Church and the perfecting of his saints.

9. Jesus, the Mediator, the sole Priest, Prophet, King, Saviour, and Head of the Church, contains in himself, by way of eminency, all the offices in his Church, and has many of their names attributed to him in the Scriptures. He is Apostle, Teacher, Pastor, Minister, and Bishop, and the only Lawgiver in Zion. It belongs to his Majesty from his throne of glory, to

rule and teach the Church, through his Word and Spirit, by the ministry of men; thus mediately exercising his own authority, and enforcing his own laws, unto the edification and establishment of his kingdom.

10. Christ, as King, has given to his Church, officers, oracles and ordinances; and especially has he ordained therein his system of doctrine, government, discipline, and worship; all which are either expressly set down in Scripture, or by good and necessary consequence may be deduced therefrom; and to which things he commands that nothing be added, and that from them naught be taken away.

11. Since the ascension of Jesus Christ to heaven, he is present with the Church by his Word and Spirit, and the benefits of all his offices are effectually applied by the Holy Ghost.

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### CHAPTER III.

#### THE VISIBLE CHURCH DEFINED.

12. The Visible Church before the law, under the law, and now under the Gospel, is one and the same, and consists of all

those who make profession of the true religion, together with their children.

13. This visible unity of the body of Christ, though obscured, is not destroyed by its division into different denominations of professing Christians; but all of these which maintain the Word and Sacraments in their fundamental integrity are to be recognized as true branches of the Church of Jesus Christ.

14. It is according to scriptural example that the Church should be divided into many individual churches.

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## CHAPTER IV.

### THE NATURE AND EXTENT OF CHURCH POWER

15. The power which Christ has committed to his Church vests in the whole body, the rulers and the ruled, constituting it a spiritual commonwealth. This power, as exercised by the people, extends to the choice of those officers whom he has appointed in his Church.

16. Ecclesiastical power, which is wholly spiritual, is twofold: the officers exercise it sometimes severally, as in preaching the

Gospel, administering the sacraments, re-proving the erring, visiting the sick, and comforting the afflicted, which is the power of order; and they exercise it sometimes jointly in Church courts, after the form of judgment, which is the power of jurisdiction.

17. The sole functions of the Church as a kingdom and government distinct from the civil commonwealth, are to proclaim, to administer, and to enforce the law of Christ revealed in the Scriptures.

18. The Church, with its ordinances, officers, and courts, is the agency which Christ has ordained for the edification and government of his people, for the propagation of the faith, and for the evangelization of the world.

19. The exercise of ecclesiastical power, whether joint or several, has the divine sanction, when in conformity with the statutes enacted by Christ, the Lawgiver, and when put forth by courts or by officers appointed thereunto in his Word.

## CHAPTER V.

## THE PARTICULAR CHURCH

20. A particular church consists of a number of professing Christians, with their offspring, associated together for divine worship and godly living, agreeably to the Scriptures, and submitting to the lawful government of Christ's Kingdom.

21. Its officers are the Pastor, the Ruling Elders, and the Deacons.

22. Its jurisdiction being a joint power, is lodged in the hands of the church Session, consisting of the Pastor and Ruling Elders.

23. To the Deacons belong the collection and administration of the offerings of the people for the relief of those in need, and for the work of the church, under the supervision of the Session.

24. The ordinances established by Christ, the Head, in his Church, are prayer; singing praises; reading, expounding and preaching the Word of God; administering the sacraments of Baptism and the Lord's Supper; public solemn fasting and thanksgiving; catechising; making offerings for the relief



of the poor and for other pious uses; and exercising discipline.

25. Churches destitute of the official ministration of the Word ought not to forsake the assembling of themselves together, but should be convened by the Session on the Lord's Day, and at other suitable times, for prayer, praise, the reading and expounding of the Holy Scriptures, and exhortation, or the reading of a sermon of some approved minister. In like manner, Christians whose lot is cast in destitute regions ought to meet for the worship of God.

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## CHAPTER VI.

### THE ORGANIZATION OF A PARTICULAR CHURCH

26. A church can be organized only by the authority of Presbytery. The Presbytery may proceed with the organization directly, or through a Commission, or through an Evangelist to whom the Presbytery has entrusted the power to organize churches. In the organization of a church, whatever be the way in which the matter originated, the procedure shall be as follows, namely:

(1.) Testimonials shall be presented to the Presbytery, or to the Commission, or to the Evangelist by such persons as are members of the Church, if there be any, and applicants for admission to the Church on profession of faith in Christ shall, on satisfactory examination, be received.

(2.) These persons shall in the next place be required to enter into covenant, by answering the following question affirmatively, with uplifted hand, namely: "Do you in reliance on God for strength, solemnly promise and covenant that you will walk together as an organized church, on the principles of the faith and order of the Presbyterian Church, and that you will study the purity and harmony of the whole body?"

(3.) The presiding minister shall then say: "I now pronounce and declare that you are constituted a church according to the Word of God and the faith and order of the Presbyterian Church in the United States. In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost. Amen."

(4.) Ruling Elders and Deacons shall then be elected, if the way be clear, and

steps taken for their examination, ordination, and installation.

(5.) Action shall be taken to secure, as soon as practicable, the regular ministration of the Word.

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## CHAPTER VII.

### CHURCH MEMBERS

27. The infant seed of believers are, through the covenant and by right of birth, members of the Church. Hence they are entitled to baptism, and to the pastoral oversight, instruction, and government of the Church, with a view to their embracing Christ, and thus possessing personally all the benefits of the covenant.

28. All baptized persons are entitled to the watchful care, instruction, and government of the Church, even though they are adults, and have made no profession of their faith in Christ.

29. Those only who have made a profession of faith in Christ are entitled to all the rights and privileges of the Church.

## CHAPTER VIII.

## CHURCH OFFICERS—GENERAL CLASSIFICATION.

30. Under the New Testament, our Lord at first collected his people out of different nations, and united them to the household of faith by the mission of extraordinary officers, endued with miraculous gifts, which have long since ceased.

31. The whole polity of the Church consists in doctrine, government, and distribution. And the ordinary and perpetual officers in the Church are, Teaching Elders, or Ministers of the Word, who are commissioned to preach the Gospel and administer the sacraments; Ruling Elders, whose office is to have the government and spiritual oversight of the church; and Deacons, whose office is to receive and administer the offerings of the people.

32. No one who holds office in the Church ought to usurp authority therein, or receive any official titles of spiritual preeminence, except such as are employed in the Scriptures.

## CHAPTER IX.

## THE MINISTER OF THE WORD

33. This office is the first in the Church, both for dignity and usefulness. The person who fills it has in Scripture different titles expressive of his various duties. As he has the oversight of the flock of Christ, he is termed Bishop. As he feeds them with spiritual food, he is termed Pastor. As he serves Christ in the Church, he is termed Minister. As it is his duty to be grave and prudent, and an example to the flock, and to govern well in the house and kingdom of Christ, he is termed Presbyter or Elder. As he is sent to declare the will of God to sinners, and to beseech them to be reconciled to God through Christ, he is termed Ambassador. As he bears the glad tidings of salvation to the ignorant and perishing, he is termed Evangelist. As he stands to proclaim the Gospel, he is termed Preacher. As he expounds the Word, and by sound doctrine both exhorts and convinces the gainsayer, he is termed Teacher. As he dispenses the manifold grace of God, and the ordinances instituted by Christ, he is termed

Steward of the mysteries of God. These titles do not indicate different grades of office, but all describe one and the same officer.

34. He that fills this office should possess a competency of human learning, and be blameless in life, sound in the faith, and apt to teach; he should exhibit a sobriety and holiness of life becoming the Gospel; he should rule his own house well; and should have a good report of them that are without.

35. As the Lord has given different gifts to the Ministers of the Word, and has committed to them various works to execute, the Church is authorized to call and appoint them to labor as Pastors, Teachers, and Evangelists, and in such other works as may be needful to the Church, according to the gifts in which they excel.

36. When a Minister is called to labor as a Pastor, it belongs to his office to pray for and with his flock, as the mouth of the people unto God; to feed the flock, by reading, expounding, and preaching the Word; to direct the congregation in singing the praises of God; to administer the sacra-

ments; to catechise the children and youth; to visit officially the people, devoting especial attention to the poor, the sick, the afflicted, and the dying; and with the other Elders, to exercise the joint power of government.

37. When a Minister is appointed to be a teacher in a school of divinity, or to give instruction in the doctrines and duties of religion to youth assembled in a college or university, it appertains to his office to take a pastoral oversight of those committed to his charge, and to be diligent in sowing the seed of the Word and gathering the fruit thereof, as one who watches for souls.

38. When a Minister is appointed to the work of the Evangelist, he is commissioned to preach the Word and administer the sacraments in foreign countries, frontier settlements, or the destitute parts of the Church; and to him may be entrusted power to organize churches, and ordain Ruling Elders and Deacons therein.

39. When a Minister is called to labor through the press, or in any other like needful work, it shall be incumbent on him to make full proof of his ministry by disseminating the Gospel for the edification of the Church.



## CHAPTER X.

## THE RULING ELDER.

40. As there were in the Church, under the law, Elders of the people for the government thereof, so in the gospel Church, Christ has furnished others besides the Ministers of the Word with gifts and commission to govern when called thereunto, which officers are entitled Ruling Elders.

41. These Ruling Elders possess the same authority and eligibility to office in the courts of the Church as the Ministers of the Word. They should, moreover, cultivate zealously their aptness to teach the Bible and should improve every opportunity of doing so, to the end that destitute places, mission points, and churches without Pastors may be supplied with religious services.

42. Those who fill this office ought to be blameless in life and sound in the faith; they should be men of wisdom and discretion; and by the holiness of their walk and conversation should be examples to the flock.

43. Ruling Elders, the immediate representatives of the people, are chosen by them, that, in conjunction with the Pastors or

Ministers, they may exercise government and discipline, and take the oversight of the spiritual interests of the particular church, and also of the Church generally, when called thereunto. It appertains to their office, both severally and jointly, to watch diligently over the flock committed to their charge, that no corruption of doctrine or of morals enter therein. Evils which they cannot correct by private admonition they should bring to the notice of the Session. They should visit the people at their homes, especially the sick; they should instruct the ignorant, comfort the mourner, nourish and guard the children of the Church; and all those duties which private Christians are bound to discharge by the law of love are especially incumbent upon them by divine vocation, and are to be discharged as official duties; they should pray with and for the people; they should be careful and diligent in seeking the fruit of the preached Word among the flock; and should inform the Pastor of cases of sickness, affliction, and awakening, and of all others which may need his special attention.

## CHAPTER XI.

## THE DEACON.

44. The office of Deacon is set forth in the Scriptures as ordinary and perpetual in the Church. The office is one of sympathy and service, after the example of the Lord Jesus; it expresses also the communion of saints, especially in their helping one another in time of need.

45. It is the duty of the Deacons to minister to those who are in need, to the sick, to the friendless, and to any who may be in distress. It is their duty also to develop the grace of liberality in the members of the church, to devise effective methods of collecting the gifts of the people, and to distribute these gifts among the objects to which they are contributed. They shall have the care of the property of the congregation, both real and personal, and shall keep in proper repair the church edifice and other buildings belonging to the congregation. In matters of special importance affecting the property of the church, they cannot take final action without the consent of the congregation. In the discharge of

their duties the Deacons are under the supervision and authority of the Session. In a church in which it is impossible for any reason to secure Deacons, the duties of the office shall devolve upon the Ruling Elders.

46. To the office of Deacon, which is spiritual in nature, should be chosen men of spiritual character, honest repute, exemplary lives, brotherly spirit, warm sympathies, and sound judgment.

47. The Deacons of a particular church shall be organized as a Board, of which the Pastor shall be an advisory member. The Board shall elect a Chairman, a Secretary, and a Treasurer, to whom shall be entrusted the funds for the current expenses of the church. It shall meet at least once a quarter, and whenever requested by the Session. The Board of each church shall determine the number necessary for a quorum.

The Board shall keep a record of its proceedings, and of all funds and their distribution, and shall submit its minutes to the Session once every six months, and at other times upon request of the Session.

It is desirable that the Session and the Board of Deacons meet in joint session once

a quarter to confer on matters of common interest.

48. Deacons may properly be appointed by the higher courts to serve on committees, especially as treasurers. It is suitable also that they be appointed trustees of any fund held by any of the Church courts. It may also be helpful for the Church courts, when devising plans of church finance, to invite wise and consecrated Deacons to their counsels.

49. The Deacons may, with much advantage, hold conferences from time to time for the discussion of the interests committed to them. Such conferences may include representatives of churches covering areas of smaller or larger extent. Any actions taken by these conferences shall have only an advisory character.

50. It is often expedient that the Session of a church should select and appoint godly women of the congregation to assist the Deacons in ministering to the sick, to widows, to orphans, to prisoners, and to others who may be in any distress or need. They may also aid the Deacons in collecting and distributing the offerings of the people.

## CHAPTER XII.

## CHURCH COURTS—IN GENERAL

51. The Church is governed by various courts, in regular gradation; which are all, nevertheless, Presbyteries, as being composed exclusively of Presbyters.

52. These courts are, church Sessions, Presbyteries, Synods, and the General Assembly.

53. The Pastor is, for prudential reasons, Moderator of the Session. The Moderator of the Presbytery, the Synod, and the General Assembly, shall be chosen at each stated meeting of these courts; and the Moderator, or, in case of his absence, the last Moderator present, or the oldest Minister in attendance, shall open the next meeting with a sermon, unless it be highly inconvenient, and shall hold the chair until a new Moderator be chosen. Provided, however, that when the Moderator of one of the higher courts is a Ruling Elder, the preaching of the opening sermon, or any other official duty, the performance of which requires the exercise of functions pertaining only to the Teaching Elder, shall be remitted

by him for execution to such Minister of the Word, being a member of the court, as he may select.

The Moderator has all authority necessary for the preservation of order and for the proper and expeditious conduct of all business before the court, and for convening and adjourning the court according to its own ruling. In any extraordinary emergency, he may, by circular letter, change the time or place, or both, of meetings to which the court stands adjourned, giving reasonable notice thereof.

54. It is the duty of the Clerk, besides recording the transactions, to preserve the records carefully, and to grant extracts from them whenever properly required. Such extracts, under the hand of the Clerk, shall be evidence to any ecclesiastical court, and to every part of the Church.

55. Every meeting of the Presbytery, Synod, and General Assembly shall be opened and closed with prayer, and in closing the final session a psalm or hymn may be sung and the benediction pronounced.

56. The expenses of Ministers and Ruling Elders in their attendance on the courts

shall be defrayed by the bodies which they respectively represent, except that the expenses of Commissioners to the General Assembly shall be paid out of the treasury of the General Assembly.

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## CHAPTER XIII.

### JURISDICTION OF CHURCH COURTS

57. These assemblies are altogether distinct from the civil magistracy, nor have they any jurisdiction in political or civil affairs. They have no power to inflict temporal pains and penalties, but their authority is in all respects moral or spiritual.

58. The jurisdiction of Church courts is only ministerial and declarative, and relates to the doctrines and precepts of Christ, to the order of the Church, and to the exercise of discipline. *First*, They can make no laws binding the conscience; but may frame symbols of faith, bear testimony against error in doctrine and immorality in practice, within or without the pale of the Church, and decide cases of conscience. *Secondly*, They have power to establish rules for the government, discipline, worship, and exten-



sion of the Church, which must be agreeable to the doctrines relating thereto contained in the Scriptures, the circumstantial details only of these matters being left to the Christian prudence and wisdom of church officers and courts. *Thirdly*, They possess the right of requiring obedience to the laws of Christ. Hence, they admit those qualified to sealing ordinances and to their respective offices, and they exclude the disobedient and disorderly from their offices or from sacramental privileges; but the highest censure to which their authority extends is to cut off the contumacious and impenitent from the congregation of believers. *Moreover*, they possess all the administrative authority necessary to give effect to the powers.

59. All Church courts are one in nature, constituted of the same elements, possessed inherently of the same kinds of rights and powers, and differing only as the Constitution may provide. Yet it is according to scriptural example, and needful to the purity and harmony of the whole Church that disputed matters of doctrine and order, arising in the lower courts should be referred to the higher courts for decision.

60. For the orderly and efficient dispatch of ecclesiastical business, it is necessary that the sphere of action of each court should be distinctly defined. The Session exercises jurisdiction over a single church; the Presbytery over what is common to the Ministers, Sessions, and churches within a prescribed district; the Synod over what belongs in common to three or more Presbyteries, and their Ministers, Sessions, and churches; and the General Assembly over such matters as concern the whole Church; and the jurisdiction of these courts is limited by the express provisions of the Constitution. Every court has the right to resolve questions of doctrine and discipline seriously and reasonably proposed, and in general to maintain truth and righteousness, condemning erroneous opinions and practices which tend to the injury of the peace, purity, or progress of the Church; and although each court exercises exclusive original jurisdiction over all matters specially belonging to it, the lower courts are subject to the review and control of the higher courts, in regular gradation. Hence, these courts are not separate and independent tribunals; but they have a

mutual relation, and every act of jurisdiction is the act of the whole Church performed by it through the appropriate organ.

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## CHAPTER XIV.

### THE CHURCH SESSION.

61. The church Session consists of the Pastor or Pastors, if there be any, and the Ruling Elders of a church. If there are three or more Ruling Elders, the Pastor and two Ruling Elders shall constitute a quorum. If there are less than three Ruling Elders, the Pastor and one Ruling Elder shall constitute a quorum.

When a church has no Pastor and there are five or more Ruling Elders, three shall constitute a quorum; if there are less than five Ruling Elders, two shall constitute a quorum; if there is only one Ruling Elder, he does not constitute a Session, but he should take spiritual oversight of the church, should represent it at Presbytery and Synod, should grant letters of dismission, and should report to the Presbytery any matter needing the action of a Church court.

However, any Session, by a majority vote of its members, may fix its own quorum, provided that it is not smaller than the quorum stated in this paragraph.

62. The Pastor is, by virtue of his office, the Moderator of the Session. In his absence, if an emergency should arise requiring immediate action, the Session may elect one of its members to preside. Should prudential reasons at any time make it advisable for a Minister other than the Pastor to preside, the Pastor may, with the concurrence of the Session, invite a Minister of the same Presbytery to perform this service.

63. When a church is without a Pastor, the Moderator of the Session shall be either a Minister appointed for that purpose by the Presbytery, or one invited by the Session to preside on a particular occasion. When it is inconvenient to procure such a Moderator, the Session may elect one of its own members to preside. In judicial cases, the Moderator shall be a Minister of the Presbytery to which the church belongs.

64. In churches where there are two or more Pastors, they shall, when present, alternately preside.

65. The church Session is charged with maintaining the spiritual government of the church, for which purpose it has power to inquire into the knowledge, principles, and Christian conduct of the church members under its care; to censure those found delinquent; to see that parents do not neglect to present their children for baptism; to receive members into the communion of the church; to grant letters of dismission to other churches, which, when given to parents, shall always include the names of their baptized children; to examine, ordain, and install Ruling Elders and Deacons on their election by the church, and to require these officers to devote themselves to their work; to examine the records of the proceedings of the Deacons; to establish and control Sabbath schools and Bible classes, with special reference to the children of the church; to order collections for pious uses; to take the oversight of the singing in the public worship of God; to assemble the people for worship when there is no Minister; to concert the best measures for promoting the spiritual interests of the church and congregation; to observe and carry out the lawful

injunctions of the higher courts; and to appoint representatives to the Presbytery and the Synod, who shall, on their return, make report of their diligence.

66. The Session shall hold stated meetings at least quarterly. Moreover, the Pastor has power to convene the Session when he may judge it requisite; and he shall always convene it when requested to do so by any two of the Ruling Elders; and when there is no Pastor, it may be convened by two Ruling Elders. The Session shall also convene when directed so to do by the Presbytery.

67. Every Session shall keep a fair record of its proceedings, which record shall be at least once in every year submitted to the inspection of the Presbytery.

68. Every Session shall keep a fair record of baptisms, of those admitted to the Lord's table, of non-communing members, and of the deaths and dismissions of church members.

69. Meetings of the Session shall ordinarily be opened and closed with prayer.

## CHAPTER XV.

## THE PRESBYTERY.

70. The Presbytery consists of all the Ministers and one Ruling Elder from each church within a certain district.

71. A Minister shall be required to hold his membership in the Presbytery within whose bounds he resides, unless there are reasons which are satisfactory to his Presbytery why he should not do so.

72. Every Ruling Elder not known to the Presbytery shall produce a certificate of his regular appointment from the Session of the church which he represents.

73. Any three Ministers belonging to the Presbytery, together with at least one Ruling Elder, being met at the time and place appointed, shall be a quorum competent to proceed to business.

However, any Presbytery, by a majority vote of those present at a stated meeting, may fix its own quorum, provided it is not smaller than the quorum stated in this paragraph.

74. Ministers seeking admission to a Presbytery shall be examined on experi-

mental religion, and also touching their views in theology and church government. If applicants come from other denominations, the Presbytery shall also require them to answer in the affirmative the questions put to candidates at their ordination.

75. The Presbytery shall cause to be transcribed, in some convenient part of the book of records, the obligations required of Ministers at their ordination, which shall be subscribed by all admitted to membership, in the following form, namely: "I, A. B., do sincerely receive and subscribe to the above obligation as a just and true exhibition of my faith and principles, and do resolve and promise to exercise my ministry in conformity thereunto."

76. The Presbytery has power to receive and issue appeals, complaints, and references brought before it in an orderly manner, and in cases in which the Session cannot exercise its authority, shall have power to assume original jurisdiction; to receive under its care candidates for the ministry; to examine and license candidates for the holy ministry; to receive, dismiss, ordain, install, remove, and judge Ministers; to review the



record of church Sessions, redress whatever they may have done contrary to order, and take effectual care that they observe the Constitution of the Church; to establish the pastoral relation, and to dissolve it at the request of one or both of the parties, or where the interests of religion imperatively demand it; to set apart Evangelists to their proper work; to require Ministers to devote themselves diligently to their sacred calling and to censure the delinquent; to see that the lawful injunctions of the higher courts are obeyed; to condemn erroneous opinions which injure the purity or peace of the Church; to visit churches for the purpose of inquiring into and redressing the evils that may have arisen in them; to unite or divide churches, at the request of the members thereof; to form and receive new churches; to take special oversight of churches without Pastors; to dissolve churches; to concert measures for the enlargement of the Church within its bounds; in general, to order whatever pertains to the spiritual welfare of the churches under its care; to appoint Commissioners to the General Assembly; and, finally, to propose to the

Synod or to the Assembly such measures as may be of common advantage to the Church at large.

77. The Presbytery shall keep a full and fair record of its proceedings, and shall send it up to the Synod annually for review. It shall report to the Synod and the General Assembly every year the condition and progress of religion within its bounds during the year; and all the important changes which may have taken place, such as the licensures, the ordinations, the receiving or dismissing of members, the removal of members by death, the union and the division of churches, and the formation of new ones.

78. The Presbytery shall meet at least twice a year on its own adjournment. When any emergency shall require a meeting earlier than the time to which the Presbytery stands adjourned, the Moderator shall, at the request, or with the concurrence, of two Ministers and two Ruling Elders of different churches, call a special meeting. Should the Moderator be for any reason unable to act, the Stated Clerk shall, under the same requirements, issue the call. If both Moderator and Stated Clerk are unable to act,

any three Ministers and two Ruling Elders of different churches shall have power to call a meeting. Notice of the special meeting shall be sent not less than ten days in advance to each Minister and to the Session of every church without a Pastor. In the notice the purpose of the meeting shall be stated, and no business other than that named in the notice is to be transacted.

79. Ministers in good standing in other Presbyteries, or in any evangelical Church, being present at any meeting of Presbytery, may be invited to sit as visiting brethren. It is proper for the Moderator to introduce these brethren to the Presbytery. This provision shall also apply to the Synod and General Assembly.

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## CHAPTER XVI.

### THE SYNOD.

80. The Synod consists of all the Ministers and one Ruling Elder from each church in a district comprising at least three Presbyteries. The qualifications for membership in the Synod and the Presbytery are the same.

81. The Synod shall meet at least once each year, and any seven Ministers belonging to it, who shall convene at the time and place of meeting, with at least three Ruling Elders, shall be a quorum; provided not more than three of the said Ministers belong to one Presbytery; provided, further, that in the case of a Synod composed of only three Presbyteries, any seven Ministers representing any two Presbyteries, together with three Ruling Elders, shall be a quorum.

82. When any emergency shall require a meeting of the Synod earlier than the time to which it stands adjourned, the Moderator shall, at the request or with the concurrence of ten Ministers and ten Ruling Elders, representing at least three Presbyteries, call a special meeting. Should the Moderator be for any reason unable to act, the Stated Clerk shall, under the same requirements, issue the call. Notice of this special meeting shall be sent not less than fifteen days in advance to each Minister and to the Session of every church without a Pastor. In the notice the purpose of the meeting is to be stated and no other business than that named in the notice is to be transacted.

83. The Synod has power to receive and issue all appeals, complaints, and references, regularly brought up from the Presbyteries; to review the records of the Presbyteries, and redress whatever they may have done contrary to order; to take effectual care that they observe the Constitution of the Church, and that they obey the lawful injunctions of the higher courts; to erect new Presbyteries, and unite or divide those which were before erected; to appoint Ministers to such work, proper to their office, as may fall under its own particular jurisdiction; in general, to take such order with respect to the Presbyteries, Sessions, and churches under its care as may be in conformity with the Word of God and the established rules, and may tend to promote the edification of the Church; to concert measures for promoting the prosperity and enlargement of the Church within its bounds; and finally, to propose to the General Assembly such measures as may be of common advantage to the whole Church.

84. It shall be the duty of the Synod to keep full and fair records of its proceedings, to submit them annually to the inspection of the General Assembly, and to report

to it the number of its Presbyteries, and of the members thereof, and in general, all important changes which may have occurred within its bounds during the year.

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## CHAPTER XVII.

### THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY.

85. The General Assembly is the highest court of this Church, and represents in one body all the churches thereof. It bears the title of THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN THE UNITED STATES, and constitutes the bond of union, peace, and correspondence among all its congregations and courts.

86. The General Assembly, which is a permanent court, shall meet at least annually upon its own adjournment, and shall consist of Commissioners from the Presbyteries in the following proportion, namely: Every Presbytery shall be entitled to send one Minister and one Ruling Elder; but if the number of communicants in its churches and Ministers on its roll together be over 4,000, it shall be entitled to send an additional Minister and Ruling Elder; and in like pro-

portion for every 4,000 communicants and Ministers.

87. When any emergency shall require a meeting of the General Assembly earlier than the time to which it stands adjourned, the Moderator shall issue a call for a special meeting at the request, or with the concurrence, of twenty-seven Commissioners who had seats in the Assembly at its preceding meeting, of whom eighteen shall be Ministers and seven Ruling Elders, representing at least twelve Presbyteries under the jurisdiction of at least five Synods. Should the Moderator be for any reason unable to act, the Stated Clerk shall, under the same requirements, issue the call. The members of the special meeting shall be the Commissioners elected to the preceding meeting of the Assembly or their alternates. A Presbytery, however, shall have the right to elect a Commissioner or alternate in the stead of one who has died since the last meeting of the Assembly, or of one who has notified the Moderator of the Presbytery of his inability to serve. Notice of the special meeting shall be sent not less than twenty days in advance to each Commissioner and to the

Moderator of each Presbytery. In the notice the purpose of the meeting is to be stated, and no other business is to be transacted.

88. Each Commissioner, before his name shall be enrolled as a member of the Assembly, shall produce from his Presbytery a commission under the hand of the Moderator and Clerk in the following or like form, namely :

“The Presbytery of \_\_\_\_\_  
 being met at \_\_\_\_\_ on the \_\_\_\_\_  
 day of \_\_\_\_\_, doth  
 hereby appoint A. B., Minister [or Ruling  
 Elder, as the case may be], and in the case  
 of his absence, then C. D., Minister [or  
 Ruling Elder, as the case may be], to be a  
 Commissioner on behalf of this Presbytery  
 to the next General Assembly of the Pres-  
 byterian Church in the United States, to  
 meet at \_\_\_\_\_, on the \_\_\_\_\_  
 day of \_\_\_\_\_ A. D.,  
 or wherever and whenever the said Assem-  
 bly may happen to sit; to consult, vote, and  
 determine on all things that may come be-  
 fore that body, according to the principles  
 and Constitution of this Church and the



Word of God. And of his diligence herein he is to render an account at his return.

*Signed by order of the Presbytery.*

[C. D.] Clerk

[A. B.] Moderator.”

89. Any eighteen of these Commissioners, of whom one-half shall be Ministers, and at least five shall be Ruling Elders, representing at least twelve Presbyteries under the jurisdiction of at least five Synods, being met on the day and at the place appointed, shall be a quorum for the transaction of business.

90. The General Assembly shall have power to receive and issue all appeals, references, and complaints regularly brought before it from the lower courts; to bear testimony against error in doctrine and immorality in practice, injuriously affecting the Church; to decide in all controversies respecting doctrine and discipline; to give its advice and instruction, in conformity with the Constitution, in all cases submitted to it; to review the records of the Synods; to take care that the lower courts observe the Constitution; to redress whatever they may have done contrary to order; to concert measures

for promoting the prosperity and enlargement of the Church; to erect new Synods; to institute and superintend the agencies necessary in the general work of evangelization; to appoint Ministers to such labors as fall under its jurisdiction; to suppress schismatical contentions and disputations, according to the rules provided therefor; to receive under its jurisdiction, with the consent of three-fourths of the Presbyteries, other ecclesiastical bodies whose organization is conformed to the doctrine and order of this Church; to authorize Synods and Presbyteries to exercise similar power in receiving bodies suited to become constituents of those courts, and lying within their geographical bounds respectively; to superintend the affairs of the whole Church; to correspond with other Churches; to unite with other ecclesiastical bodies whose organization is conformed to the doctrines and order of this Church, such union to be effected by a mode of procedure defined in Chapter XXVIII, Paragraph 162; and in general to recommend measures for the promotion of charity, truth, and holiness through all the churches under its care.

91. The whole business of the Assembly being finished, and the vote taken for final adjournment, the Moderator shall say from the chair: "By virtue of the authority delegated to me by the Church, I do now declare that the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the United States is adjourned, to convene at — on the — day of —, A. D.," after which he shall pray and return thanks, and pronounce, or cause to be pronounced, on those present, the apostolic benediction.

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## CHAPTER XVIII.

### ECCLESIASTICAL COMMISSIONS.

92. A Commission differs from an ordinary committee in this, that while a committee is appointed to examine, consider and report, a Commission is authorized to deliberate upon and conclude the business referred to it. It shall keep a full record of its proceedings, which shall be submitted to the court appointing it, entered on its minutes, and regarded and treated as the action of the court.

93. Among the matters that may be properly executed by Commissions are the taking of testimony in judicial cases, the ordination of Ministers, the installation of Ministers, the visitation of portions of the Church affected with disorder, and the organization of new churches.

Every Commission appointed by Presbytery shall consist of at least three Ministers and one Ruling Elder, and the Presbytery at the time of the appointment of the Commission shall determine what the quorum shall be. However, should a Presbytery clothe a Commission with judicial powers and authority to conduct judicial process, or with power to ordain a Minister of the Gospel, the quorum of such Commission shall not be less than three Ministers and one Ruling Elder. When the ordination of a Minister is committed to a Commission, the Presbytery itself shall conduct the previous examination.

94. The Presbytery, Synod, or General Assembly may, of its own motion, commit any judicial case coming before it by appeal or complaint to a Commission, and should ordinarily follow this procedure, especially

when requested by one or both parties to the case. Such a Commission shall be appointed by the court from its members other than members of the court from which the case comes up.

A Judicial Commission of a Synod shall consist of not less than fifteen, of whom not less than seven shall be Ruling Elders; a Judicial Commission of the Assembly of not less than twenty-seven, of whom not less than thirteen shall be Ruling Elders. In each case two-thirds of the Commissioners shall be a quorum to attend to business. The Commission shall try the case in the manner prescribed by the Rules of Discipline; shall submit to the court a full statement of the case and the judgment rendered, all of which shall be entered on the minutes of the court and accepted as its action and judgment in the case.

95. The General Assembly shall have power to commit the various interests pertaining to the general work of evangelization to one or more Commissions.

## CHAPTER XIX.

## CHURCH ORDERS—THE DOCTRINE OF VOCATION.

96. Ordinary vocation to office in the Church is the calling of God by the Spirit, through the inward testimony of a good conscience, the manifest approbation of God's people, and the concurring judgment of a lawful court of the Church.

97. The government of the Church is representative, and the right of God's people to elect their officers is inalienable. Therefore no man can be placed over a church in any office without the election, or at least the consent of that church.

98. Upon those whom God calls to bear office in his Church he bestows suitable gifts for the discharge of their various duties. And it is indispensable that, besides possessing the necessary gifts and abilities, natural and acquired, every one admitted to an office should be sound in the faith, and his life be according to godliness. Wherefore every candidate for office is to be approved by the court by which he is to be ordained.

## CHAPTER XX.

## THE DOCTRINE OF ORDINATION.

99. Those who have been called to office in the Church are to be inducted by the ordination of a court.

100. Ordination is the authoritative admission of one duly called to an office in the Church of God, accompanied with prayer and the laying on of hands, to which it is proper to add the giving of the right hand of fellowship.

101. As every ecclesiastical office, according to the Scriptures, is a special charge, no man shall be ordained unless it be to the performance of a definite work.

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## CHAPTER XXI.

## CANDIDATES FOR THE GOSPEL MINISTRY

102. A candidate for the ministry is a member of the Church in full communion who, believing himself to be called to preach the Gospel, enters on a course of study and of practical training to prepare himself for this office.

103. It is recommended that every candidate for the ministry should put himself under the care of a Presbytery, which should ordinarily be the Presbytery that has jurisdiction of the church of which he is a member. He should be encouraged by the Session to do this; and upon his request, the Session should furnish him with a certificate of his membership, and with testimonials of its judgment regarding his Christian character and promise of usefulness in the ministry, to be laid before the Presbytery.

104. In making application to be taken under the care of the Presbytery, the candidate for the ministry, in addition to presenting testimonials from his church Session, shall be examined by the Presbytery on experimental religion and on his motives for seeking the ministry.

If the testimonials and the examination prove satisfactory, the Presbytery shall receive him under its care after the following manner:

The Moderator shall propose to the candidate these questions:

(1.) Do you promise in reliance upon the grace of God to maintain a becoming Chris-



tian character, and to be diligent and faithful in making full preparation for the sacred ministry?

(2.) Do you promise to submit yourself to the proper supervision of the Presbytery in matters that concern your preparation for the ministry?

If these questions be answered in the affirmative, the Moderator, or some one appointed by him, shall give the candidate a brief charge; and the proceedings shall close with prayer. The name of the candidate is then to be recorded on the Presbytery's Roll of Candidates for the Ministry.

105. The candidate continues to be a private member of the church and subject to the jurisdiction of the Session, but as respects his preparatory training for the ministry, he is under the oversight of the Presbytery. It shall be the duty of the Presbytery to show a kindly and sympathetic interest in him, and to give him counsel and guidance in regard to his studies, his practical training, and the institutions of learning he should attend. In no case may a candidate omit from his course of study any of the subjects prescribed in the Form of Gov-

ernment as tests for licensure and ordination without obtaining the consent of Presbytery; and where such consent is given the Presbytery shall record the fact and the reasons therefor.

106. For the development of his Christian character, for the service he can render, and for his more effective training, the candidate, when entering on his theological studies, should be authorized and encouraged by the Presbytery to conduct public worship, to expound the Scriptures to the people, and to engage in other forms of Christian work. These forms of service should be rendered under the direction of Presbytery, and also with the sanction and under the guidance of the candidate's instructors during the time of his being under their instruction. A candidate should not undertake to serve statedly a church which is without a pastor unless he has the approval of the Presbytery having jurisdiction of the church.

107. The Presbytery shall require every candidate for the ministry under its care to make a report to it at least once a year; and it shall secure from his instructors an annual

report upon his deportment, diligence, and progress in study.

108. The Presbytery may, upon application of the candidate, give him a certificate of dismissal to another Presbytery; and a candidate may, at his request, be allowed to withdraw from the care of the Presbytery. The Presbytery may also, for sufficient reasons, remove the name of a candidate from its roll of candidates; but in such case it shall report its action and the reasons therefor to the candidate and to the Session of his church.

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## CHAPTER XXII.

### THE LICENSURE OF CANDIDATES FOR THE GOSPEL MINISTRY.

109. A candidate for the ministry is licensed by the Presbytery to preach the Gospel in order that, after he has made sufficient trial of his gifts and the Presbytery has received assurance of his approval by the Church, he may be ordained to the sacred office of the gospel ministry. However, if a candidate has been called to a definite work which he desires to accept, and the Presby-

tery is satisfied by his examination for licensure that he meets the requirements for ordination, the licensure may be omitted and the Presbytery may proceed at once to ordain him to the full ministry of the Gospel.

110. The trials of a candidate applying for licensure shall be had by the Presbytery under whose care he has placed himself. But if he desires to labor within the bounds of another Presbytery, his own Presbytery may dismiss him to that Presbytery for licensure.

If a candidate applying for licensure is not under the care of a Presbytery, his trials for licensure shall ordinarily be had by the Presbytery having jurisdiction of the church of which he is a member. But should the candidate find it more convenient to stand his trials for licensure before another Presbytery, he may be received by that Presbytery on producing testimonials from the Session of the church to which he belongs and from any two Ministers in good standing in the Presbytery in which the church is located, testifying as to his exemplary piety and other requisite qualifications for the gospel ministry. And the Presbytery

shall examine him respecting his experimental acquaintance with religion and the motives which influence him to desire the sacred office. The examination shall be close and particular, and should ordinarily be conducted in the presence of the Presbytery.

111. A candidate for licensure shall be required to present a diploma of Bachelor or Master of Arts from some approved college or university, or at least authentic testimonials of having taken a regular course of academic studies. A candidate for ordination shall also be required to present a diploma from some approved theological seminary, or at least authentic testimonials of having gone through a regular course of theological studies.

#### *Examination for Licensure*

112. The Presbytery shall examine the candidate on his knowledge of the Latin Language, Mental Philosophy, Logic, Rhetoric, Ethics, the Natural Sciences and similar subjects, or in lieu of the examination on any of these academic studies, it may accept a diploma or certificate from an approved college. It shall also examine him

on his knowledge of Theology, the Sacraments and Church Government, the original languages of the Holy Scriptures, the English Bible, and Church History, or in lieu of the examination on the original languages of the Scriptures and Church History, it may accept a diploma or certificate from an approved theological seminary. Moreover, the Presbytery shall require:

(1.) A discussion in English, or in Latin, of a thesis on some common head in divinity.

(2.) An exegesis or critical exercise, in which the candidate shall give a specimen of his taste and judgment in sacred criticism; presenting an explication of the original text, stating its connection, illustrating its force and beauties, removing its difficulties, and solving any important question which it may present.

(3.) A lecture or exposition of several verses of Scripture.

(4.) A sermon.

113. These and other similar exercises, at the discretion of the Presbytery, shall be exhibited until it shall have obtained satis-

faction as to the candidate's piety, learning, and aptness to teach in the Church.

114. No Presbytery shall omit any of these parts of trial except in extraordinary cases; and whenever a Presbytery shall omit any of these parts, it shall always make a record of the reasons therefor, and of the trial parts omitted.

### *Questions for Licensure*

115. If the Presbytery be satisfied with the trials of the candidate, it shall then proceed to license him in the following manner:

The Moderator shall propose to him the following questions, namely:

(1.) Do you believe the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments to be the Word of God, the only infallible rule of faith and practice?

(2.) Do you sincerely receive and adopt the Confession of Faith and the Catechisms of this Church, as containing the system of doctrine taught in the Holy Scriptures?

(3.) Do you promise to study the peace, unity, and purity of the Church?

(4.) Do you promise to submit yourself, in the Lord, to the government of this Presbytery, or of any other into the bounds of which you may be called?

116. The candidate having answered these questions in the affirmative, the Moderator shall offer a prayer suitable for the occasion, and shall address the candidate to the following purpose: "In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, and by that authority which He has given to the Church for its edification, we do license you to preach the Gospel as a probationer for the holy ministry, wherever God in His providence may call you; and for this purpose may the blessing of God rest upon you; and the Spirit of Christ fill your heart. Amen."

And record shall be made of the licensure in the following or like form, namely: At——, the —— day of ——, the Presbytery of ——, having received testimonials commending ——, and evidence of his being a communicant of the church, of his good moral character, and of his having pursued suitable courses of study, proceeded to submit him to the prescribed tests for licensure, which were met to the approval of the Pres-



bytery. On his satisfactorily answering the questions appointed to be put to applicants for licensure, Mr. ———— was licensed by the Presbytery to preach the Gospel as a probationer for the ministry within the bounds of this Presbytery, or wherever he shall in an orderly way be invited to preach.

117. When any candidate for licensure shall have occasion, while his trials are going on, to remove from the bounds of his own Presbytery into those of another, it shall be considered regular for the latter Presbytery, on his producing proper testimonials from the former, to take up his trials at the point at which they were left, and conduct them to a conclusion in the same manner as if they had been commenced by itself.

118. When any licentiate shall by the permission of his Presbytery remove beyond its limits, an extract of the record of his licensure, and a Presbyterian recommendation, signed by the Clerk, shall be his testimonial to the Presbytery under whose care he shall come.

119. Presbyteries should require licentiates to devote themselves diligently to the

trial of their gifts; and no one should be ordained to the work of the gospel ministry until he has given evidence of his ability to edify the Church.

120. The license to preach the Gospel shall expire at the end of four years, but the Presbytery may, if it thinks proper, renew it for the period of one year. If the licentiate, without necessity, shall devote himself to such pursuits as interfere with a full trial of his gifts, it shall be the duty of the Presbytery to revoke his license.

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## CHAPTER XXIII.

### THE ELECTION OF PASTORS.

121. Before a candidate, or a licentiate, can be ordained to the office of the ministry, he must receive a call to a definite work.

122. Every church should be under the pastoral oversight of a Minister, and when a church has no Pastor it should seek to secure one without delay.

A church shall proceed to elect a Pastor in the following manner:

The Session shall order a congregational meeting to convene at the regular place of

worship. Public notice of the time, place, and purpose of this meeting shall be given at least one week prior to the time of the meeting. It shall always be the duty of the Session to call a congregational meeting when requested to do so by one-fourth of the persons entitled to vote.

123. When a congregation is convened for the election of a Pastor it is important that they should elect a Minister of the Presbyterian Church in the United States to preside, but if this be impracticable, they may elect any male member of that church. The Session shall appoint one of their number to call the meeting to order and to preside until the congregation shall elect their presiding officer. All communing members in good and regular standing, but no others, are entitled to vote in the churches to which they are respectively attached.

### *Method of Voting*

124. The voters being convened, and prayer for Divine guidance having been offered, the Moderator shall put the question: "Are you ready to proceed to the election of a Pastor?" If they declare themselves

ready, the Moderator shall call for nominations, or the election may proceed by ballot without nominations. In every case a majority of all the voters present shall be required to elect.

125. On the election of a Pastor, if it appears that a large minority of the voters are averse to the candidate who has received a majority of votes, and cannot be induced to concur in the call, the Moderator shall endeavor to dissuade the majority from prosecuting it further; but if the electors be nearly or quite unanimous, or if the majority shall insist upon their right to call a Pastor, the Moderator shall proceed to draw a call in due form, and to have it subscribed by them, certifying at the same time in writing the number of those who do not concur in the call, and any facts of importance, all of which proceedings shall be laid before the Presbytery, together with the call.

### *Form of Call*

126. The call shall be in the following or like form, namely:

The church of ———, being on sufficient grounds well satisfied of the ministerial

qualifications of you, ———, and having good hopes from our knowledge of your labors that your ministrations in the Gospel will be profitable to our spiritual interests, do earnestly call you to undertake the pastoral office in said congregation, promising you, in the discharge of your duty, all proper support, encouragement and obedience in the Lord. And that you may be free from worldly cares and avocations, we hereby promise and oblige ourselves to pay you the sum of \$—— a year in regular monthly (or quarterly) payments (and a manse), during the time of your being and continuing the regular pastor of this church.

In testimony whereof we have respectively subscribed our names this——, day of——, A. D. ——.

Attest:

I, A. B., having moderated the congregational meeting which extended a call to ——— for his ministerial services, do certify that the call has been made in all respects according to the rules laid down in the Book of Church Order, and that the persons who signed the foregoing call were

authorized to do so by vote of the congregation.

.....

*Moderator of the Meeting.*

127. If any church shall choose to subscribe its call by the Ruling Elders and Deacons, or by a committee, it shall be at liberty to do so. But it shall, in such case, be fully certified to the Presbytery by the Minister or other person who presided, that the persons signing have been appointed for that purpose by a public vote of the church, and that the call has been in all other respects prepared as above directed.

### *Prosecution of Call*

128. One or more commissioners shall be appointed by the church to present and prosecute the call before the Presbytery.

129. If the call be to a Minister, licentiate, or candidate of another Presbytery, the commissioners appointed to prosecute the call shall produce an attested certificate from their own Presbytery that it has been laid before that body and found in order, and that permission has been granted them to

prosecute it before the Presbytery to which he belongs.

130. A congregation desiring to call a Pastor from his charge, shall, by its commissioners, represent to the Presbytery the ground on which it pleads his removal. The Presbytery, having heard all the parties, may, upon viewing the whole case, either recommend them to desist from prosecuting the call; or may order it to be delivered to the Minister to whom it is addressed, with or without advice; or may decline to place the call in his hands; as it shall appear most for the peace and edification of the Church at large; or it may refer the whole matter to the Synod for advice and direction; and no Pastor shall be transferred without his own consent. If the parties are not ready to have the matter issued at the meeting then in progress, a written citation shall be given the Minister and his church to appear before the Presbytery at its next meeting, which citation shall be read from the pulpit on the Sabbath after the sermon, at least two Sabbaths before the intended meeting.

131. If the congregation, or other field of labor, to which a Minister, or licentiate, or

candidate is called, be under the jurisdiction of a different Presbytery, on his acceptance of a call he shall be furnished with the proper testimonials, and required to repair immediately to that Presbytery, in order that he may be regularly inducted into his office.

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## CHAPTER XXIV.

### THE ORDINATION AND INSTALLATION OF MINISTERS.

132. No Minister or licentiate or candidate shall receive a call from a church but by the permission of his Presbytery. When a call has been presented to the Presbytery, if found in order and the Presbytery deem it for the good of the Church, they shall place it in the hands of the person to whom it is addressed.

133. When a call for the pastoral services of a licentiate has been accepted by him, the Presbytery shall take immediate steps for his ordination.

134. No Presbytery shall ordain any licentiate or candidate to the office of the gospel ministry, with reference to his laboring within the bounds of another Pres-



bytery, but shall furnish him with the necessary testimonials, and require him to repair to the Presbytery within whose bounds he expects to labor, that he may submit himself to its authority, according to the Constitution of the Church.

135. Trials for ordination in a different Presbytery from that in which the candidate was licensed shall consist of a careful examination as to his acquaintance with experimental religion, as to his knowledge of Philosophy, Theology, Ecclesiastical History, the Greek and Hebrew languages, the English Bible, and such other branches of learning as to the Presbytery shall appear requisite, and as to his knowledge of the Doctrines, of the Sacraments, and the principles and rules of the Government and Discipline of the Church. Or, in lieu of the examination in Philosophy, Ecclesiastical History, and the Greek and Hebrew languages, it may accept certificates of approved institutions of learning. He shall further be required to preach a sermon before the Presbytery. No Presbytery shall omit any of these parts of trial for ordination except in extraordinary cases; and whenever a Presbytery shall omit

any of these parts, it shall always make a record of the reasons therefor and of the trial parts omitted. Trials for ordination in the same Presbytery in which the candidate was licensed may be omitted when the examination for licensure has satisfied the Presbytery of his fitness for ordination. The Presbytery being fully satisfied of his qualifications for the sacred office, shall appoint a day for his ordination, which ought, if practicable, to be in that church of which he is to be the Pastor.

136. The day appointed for the ordination having come, and the Presbytery being convened, a member of the Presbytery, previously appointed to that duty, shall preach a sermon adapted to the occasion. The same, or another member appointed to preside, shall afterwards briefly recite from the pulpit the proceedings of the Presbytery preparatory to the ordination; he shall point out the nature and importance of the ordinance, and endeavor to impress the audience with a proper sense of the solemnity of the transaction.

*Questions for Ordination*

Then addressing himself to the candidate, he shall propose to him the following questions, namely:

(1.) Do you believe the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments to be the Word of God, the only infallible rule of faith and practice?

(2.) Do you sincerely receive and adopt the Confession of Faith and the Catechisms of this Church, as containing the system of doctrine taught in the Holy Scriptures; and do you further promise that if at any time you find yourself out of accord with any of the fundamentals of this system of doctrine, you will on your own initiative, make known to your Presbytery the change which has taken place in your views since the assumption of this ordination vow?

(3.) Do you approve of the government and discipline of the Presbyterian Church in the United States?

(4.) Do you promise subjection to your brethren in the Lord?

(5.) Have you been induced, as far as you know your own heart, to seek the office of the holy ministry from love to God and

a sincere desire to promote His glory in the Gospel of His Son?

(6.) Do you promise to be zealous and faithful in maintaining the truths of the Gospel and the purity and peace of the Church, whatever persecution or opposition may arise unto you on that account?

(7.) Do you engage to be faithful and diligent in the exercise of all your duties as a Christian and a Minister of the Gospel, whether personal or relative, private or public; and to endeavor by the grace of God to adorn the profession of the Gospel in your manner of life, and to walk with exemplary piety before the flock of which God shall make you overseer?

(8.) Are you now willing to take the charge of this church, agreeably to your declaration when accepting their call? And do you, relying upon God for strength, promise to discharge to it the duties of a Pastor?

### *Questions to Congregation*

137. The candidate having answered these questions in the affirmative, the presiding

Minister shall propose to the church the following questions :

(1.) Do you, the people of this congregation, continue to profess your readiness to receive ——, whom you have called to be your Pastor?

(2.) Do you promise to receive the word of truth from his mouth with meekness and love, and to submit to him in the due exercise of discipline?

(3.) Do you promise to encourage him in his labors, and to assist his endeavors for your instruction and spiritual edification?

(4.) And do you engage to continue to him while he is your Pastor that competent worldly maintenance which you have promised, and to furnish him with whatever you may see needful for the honor of religion and for his comfort among you?

138. The people having answered these questions in the affirmative, by holding up their right hands, the candidate shall kneel, and the presiding Minister shall, with prayer and the laying on of the hands of the Presbytery, according to the apostolic example, solemnly set him apart to the holy office of

the gospel ministry. Prayer being ended, he shall rise from his knees; and the Minister who presides shall first, and afterwards all the members of the Presbytery in their order, take him by the right hand, saying, in words to this effect: "We give you the right hand of fellowship, to take part in this ministry with us." The Moderator shall then say: "I now pronounce and declare that A. B. has been regularly elected, ordained, and installed Pastor of this congregation, agreeably to the Word of God, and according to the Constitution of the Presbyterian Church in the United States; and that as such he is entitled to all support, encouragement, honor, and obedience in the Lord: In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Amen." After which the Minister presiding, or some other Minister or Ruling Elder appointed for the purpose, shall give a solemn charge to the Pastor and to the congregation, to persevere in the discharge of their reciprocal duties, and then after prayer and the singing of a psalm, or hymn, the congregation shall be dismissed with the benediction. And the Presbytery shall duly record the transaction.

139. After the installation, the heads of families of the congregation then present, or at least the Ruling Elders and Deacons, should come forward to their Pastor, and give him their right hand, in token of cordial reception and affectionate regard.

### *Questions for Installation*

140. In the installation of an ordained Minister, the following questions are to be substituted for those addressed to a candidate for ordination, namely:

(1.) Are you now willing to take charge of this congregation as their Pastor, agreeably to your declaration in accepting its call?

(2.) Do you conscientiously believe and declare, as far as you know your own heart, that, in taking upon you this charge, you are influenced by a sincere desire to promote the glory of God and the good of the Church?

(3.) Do you solemnly promise that, by the assistance of the grace of God, you will endeavor faithfully to discharge all the duties of a Pastor to this congregation, and will be careful to maintain a deportment in all

respects becoming a Minister of the Gospel of Christ, agreeably to your ordination engagements?

141. In the ordination of candidates or licentiates as Evangelists the same questions are to be propounded as in the ordination of Pastors, with the exception of the eighth, for which the following shall be substituted :

“Do you now undertake the work of an Evangelist, and do you promise, in reliance on God for strength, to be faithful in the discharge of all the duties incumbent on you as a Minister of the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ?”

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## CHAPTER XXV.

### THE DISSOLUTION OF THE PASTORAL RELATION.

142. When any Minister shall tender the resignation of his pastoral charge to his Presbytery, the Presbytery shall cite the church to appear by its commissioners, or the church may so appear upon its own motion, to show cause, if it has any, why the Presbytery should not accept the resignation. If



the church fail to appear, or if its reasons for retaining its Pastor be deemed insufficient, his resignation shall be accepted, and the pastoral relation dissolved. If any church desires to be relieved of its Pastor, a similar procedure shall be observed. But whether the Minister or the church initiate proceedings for a dissolution of the relation, there shall always be a meeting of the congregation called and conducted precisely in the same manner as when the call of a Pastor is to be made out.

The pastoral relation of a Co-Pastor, if there be any, shall be dissolved on the dissolution of the pastoral relation of the senior Pastor.

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## CHAPTER XXVI.

### ELECTION, ORDINATION AND INSTALLATION OF RULING ELDERS AND DEACONS.

143. Every church shall elect persons to the offices of Ruling Elder and Deacon in the following manner: When it seems desirable for the church to have additional Ruling Elders or Deacons, the Session shall order a congregational meeting to convene at the

regular place of worship. Public notice shall be given of the time, place, and purpose of this meeting at least one week prior to the appointed time. If one-fourth of the persons entitled to vote shall at any time request the Session to call a congregational meeting for the purpose of electing additional officers, it shall be the duty of the Session to call such a meeting.

144. The Pastor is, by virtue of his office, Moderator of congregational meetings. If there is no Pastor, the Session shall appoint one of their number to call the meeting to order and to preside until the congregation shall elect their presiding officer, who may be a Minister of the Presbyterian Church in the United States or any male member of that particular church.

145. All communing members in good and regular standing, but no others, are entitled to vote in the election of church officers in the churches to which they respectively belong. When a majority of all the voters present cast their votes for a person for either of these offices, he shall be considered elected.

146. The voters being convened, the Moderator shall explain the purpose of the meeting and then put the question: "Are you now ready to proceed to the election of additional Ruling Elders (or Deacons)?" If they declare themselves ready, the election may proceed by nominations, or by private ballot without nomination, as the congregation may prefer. In every case a majority of all the voters present shall be required to elect.

147. When any person has been elected to the office of Ruling Elder or Deacon the Session shall confer with him as to his acceptance, and if he accepts shall at an appointed time examine him as to his religious experience, his knowledge of the system of doctrine, government, and discipline contained in the Standards of the Church, and the duties of the office to which he has been elected. If the examination is approved, the Session shall appoint a day for his ordination and installation.

148. The day having arrived, and the Session being convened in the presence of the congregation, a sermon shall be preached, if convenient; after which the presiding Minister shall state in a concise manner the

warrant and nature of the office of Ruling Elder, or Deacon, together with the character proper to be sustained and the duties to be fulfilled. Having done this, he shall propose to the candidate, in the presence of the church, the following questions, namely :

(1.) Do you believe the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments to be the Word of God, the only infallible rule of faith and practice?

(2.) Do you sincerely receive and adopt the Confession of Faith and the Catechisms of this Church, as containing the system of doctrine taught in the Holy Scriptures; and do you further promise that if at any time you find yourself out of accord with any of the fundamentals of this system of doctrine, you will, on your own initiative, make known to your Session the change which has taken place in your views since the assumption of this ordination vow?

(3.) Do you approve the government and discipline of the Presbyterian Church in the United States?

(4.) Do you accept the office of Ruling Elder (or Deacon, as the case may be) in this church, and promise faithfully to per-

form all the duties thereof, and to endeavor by the grace of God to adorn the profession of the Gospel in your life, and to set a worthy example before the church of which God has made you an officer?

(5.) Do you promise subjection to your brethren in the Lord?

(6.) Do you promise to study the peace, unity, edification, and purity of the Church?

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The Ruling Elder or Deacon elect having answered in the affirmative, the Minister shall address to the members of the church the following question, namely:

Do you, the members of this church, acknowledge and receive this brother as a Ruling Elder (or Deacon), and do you promise to yield him all that honor, encouragement, and obedience in the Lord to which his office, according to the Word of God and the Constitution of this Church, entitles him?

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The members of the church having answered this question in the affirmative, by holding up their right hands, the Minister

shall proceed to set apart the candidate, with prayer and the laying on of the hands of the Session, to the office of Ruling Elder (or Deacon). Prayer being ended, the members of the Session (and the Deacons, if the case be that of a Deacon) shall take the newly ordained officer by the hand, saying, in words to this effect: "We give you the right hand of fellowship, to take part in this office with us." The Minister shall then say: "I now pronounce and declare that A. B. has been regularly elected, ordained and installed a Ruling Elder (or Deacon) in this church, agreeably to the Word of God, and according to the Constitution of the Presbyterian Church in the United States; and that as such he is entitled to all encouragement, honor and obedience in the Lord: In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Amen." After which he shall give to the Ruling Elder (or Deacon) and to the church an exhortation suited to the occasion.

149. The offices of Ruling Elder and Deacon are perpetual; nor can they be laid aside at pleasure; nor can any person be degraded from either office but by deposition

after regular trial; yet a Ruling Elder or Deacon may have reasons which he deems valid for being released from the active duties of his office. In such a case the Session, after conference with him and careful consideration of the matter, may, if it thinks proper, accept his resignation and dissolve the official relationship which exists between him and the church.

Or the Ruling Elder, or Deacon, though chargeable with neither heresy nor immorality, may become unacceptable in his official capacity to a majority of the church which he serves. In such a case the church may take the initiative by a majority vote at a regularly called congregational meeting, and request the Session to dissolve the official relationship between the church and the officer without censure. The Session, after conference with the Ruling Elder, or Deacon, and after careful consideration, may use its discretion as to dissolving the official relationship. In either case the Session shall report its action to the congregation.

150. When a Ruling Elder or Deacon who has been released from his official relation is again elected to his office in the same or another church, he shall be installed after

the above form, with the omission of ordination.

151. When a Ruling Elder or Deacon makes such change of residence that he cannot or does not for a period of two years perform the duties of his office, his official relationship shall be dissolved by the Session and the action reported to the congregation.

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## CHAPTER XXVII.

### CONGREGATIONAL MEETINGS.

152. The congregation consists of all the communing members of a particular church, and they only are entitled to vote.

153. Whenever it may seem for the best interests of the church that a congregational meeting should be held, the Session shall call such meeting and give public notice, and no business shall be transacted at such meeting except what is stated in the notice. The Session shall always call a congregational meeting when requested in writing to do so by one-fourth of the communing members of the church.

154. A quorum of the congregational meeting shall consist of one-fourth of the



resident communing members, if the church has not more than one hundred such members, and of one-sixth of the resident communing members if a church has more than one hundred such members.

155. The Pastor shall be the Moderator of congregational meetings by virtue of his office. If it should be impracticable or inexpedient for him to preside, or if there is no Pastor, the Session shall appoint one of their number to call the meeting to order and to preside until the congregation shall elect their presiding officer, who may be a Minister of the Presbyterian Church in the United States or any male member of that particular church.

156. A Clerk shall be elected by the congregation to serve at that meeting or for a definite period, whose duty shall be to keep correct minutes of the proceedings and of all business transacted and to preserve these minutes in a permanent form, after they have been attested by the Moderator and the Clerk of the meeting. He shall also send a copy of these minutes to the Session of the church.

157. When a particular church is incorporated, its meetings for the transaction of the business of the corporation will be provided for in its charter and by-laws, which must always be in accord with the Standards of the Presbyterian Church in the United States, and must not infringe upon the powers or duties of the Session or of the Board of Deacons.

158. If a church shall be dissolved by the Presbytery, or otherwise cease to exist, and no disposition has been made of its property, those who hold the title to the property shall deliver, convey, and transfer to the Presbytery of which the church was a member, or to the authorized agents of the Presbytery, all property of the church; and the receipt and acquittance of the Presbytery, or its proper representatives, shall be a full and complete discharge of all liabilities of such persons holding the property of the church. The Presbytery receiving such property shall apply the same or the proceeds thereof at its discretion.

## CHAPTER XXVIII.

AMENDING THE CONSTITUTION OF THE  
CHURCH.

159. The Constitution of the Presbyterian Church in the United States consists of its doctrinal symbols, embraced in the Confession of Faith, and the Larger and Shorter Catechisms, together with the Book of Church Order, which comprises the Form of Government, the Rules of Discipline, and the Directory for Worship.

160. Amendments to the Book of Church Order may be made only in the following manner :

(1) Approval of the proposed amendment by the General Assembly and its recommendation to the Presbyteries.

(2) The advice and consent of a majority of the Presbyteries.

(3) The approval and enactment by a subsequent General Assembly.

161. Amendments to the Confession of Faith and Catechisms of this Church may be made only in the following manner :

(1) The approval of the proposed amendment by the General Assembly and its commendation to the Presbyteries.

(2) The advice and consent of three-fourths of the Presbyteries.

(3) The approval and enactment by a subsequent General Assembly.

This paragraph (161) can be amended only by the same method as it prescribes for the amendment of the Confession of Faith and Catechisms of the Church.

162. Full organic union and consolidation of the Presbyterian Church in the United States with any other ecclesiastical body can be effected only in the following manner :

(1) The approval of the proposed union by the General Assembly and its commendation to the Presbyteries.

(2) The advice and consent of three-fourths of the Presbyteries.

(3) The approval and consummation by a subsequent General Assembly.

This paragraph (162) can be amended only by the same method which is prescribed for the amendment of the Confession of Faith and Catechisms of the Church.

163. If by reason of the failure of a number of Presbyteries to act, or to report action, on any proposed amendment to the Standards, the response of the Presbyteries is not satisfactory to the succeeding General Assembly, it may defer action for one year. In that event the General Assembly shall urge the delinquent Presbyteries to report their judgment to the next Assembly, which shall take final action on the proposed amendment.



PART II.  
The Rules of Discipline





## PART II.

# The Rules of Discipline

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### CHAPTER I.

#### DISCIPLINE—ITS NATURE, SUBJECTS, AND ENDS.

164. Discipline is the exercise of authority given the Church by the Lord Jesus Christ to instruct and guide its members and to promote its purity and welfare.

The term has two senses: the one referring to the whole government, inspection, training, guardianship, and control which the Church maintains over its members, its officers, and its courts; the other a restricted and technical sense, signifying judicial process.

165. In the one sense, all baptized persons, being members of the Church, are subject to its discipline and entitled to the benefits thereof; but in the other sense it refers only to those who have made a profession of their faith in Christ.

166. The ends of discipline, so far as it involves judicial action, are the spiritual good of the offender, the vindication of the honor of Christ, the rebuke of offences, the removal of scandal, and the promotion of the purity and welfare of the Church.

167. The power which Christ has given the Church is for building up, and not for destruction, and is to be exercised as under a dispensation of mercy and not of wrath. The Church is to act as a mother who corrects her children for their good, that every one of them may be presented faultless in the day of Christ.

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## CHAPTER II.

### DISCIPLINE OF NON-COMMUNING MEMBERS.

168. The spiritual nurture, instruction, and training of the children of the Church are committed by God primarily to their parents who are responsible to the Church for the faithful discharge of their obligations, and it is a principal duty of the Church to promote true religion in the home.

169. The Church should also make special provision for instructing the children in the

Bible and in the church Catechisms, and to this end Sessions should establish and conduct under their authority Sunday Schools and Bible classes, and should adopt such other methods as may be found helpful.

170. The Church should maintain constant and sympathetic relations with the children, and should encourage them on coming to years of discretion to make confession of the Lord Jesus Christ and to enter upon all the privileges of full church membership. Even if they are wayward they should be cherished by the Church and every means used to reclaim them.

171. Adult non-communing members who receive with meekness and appreciation the oversight and instruction of the Church are entitled to special attention. Their rights and privileges under the covenant should be frequently and fully explained, and they should be warned of the sin and danger of neglecting their covenant obligations.

172. All non-communing members shall be deemed under the care of the church to which their parents belong, if they live under the parental roof and are minors; other-

wise, under that of the church where they reside, or with which they ordinarily worship.

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## CHAPTER III.

### OFFENCES.

173. An offence, the proper object of judicial process, is anything in the principles or practice of a church member professing faith in Christ, which is contrary to the Word of God. The Confession of Faith and the Larger and Shorter Catechisms of the Westminster Assembly, together with the formularies of government, discipline, and worship, are accepted by the Presbyterian Church in the United States as standard expositions of the teachings of Scripture in relation to both faith and practice. Nothing, therefore, ought to be considered by any court as an offence, or admitted as a matter of accusation, which cannot be proved to be such from Scripture, as interpreted in these Standards.

174. Offences are either personal or general, private or public; but all of them

being sins against God, are therefore grounds of discipline.

175. Personal offences are violations of the divine law, considered in the special relation of wrongs or injuries to particular individuals. General offences are heresies or immoralities having no such relation, or considered apart from it.

176. Private offences are those which are known only to a few persons. Public offences are those which are notorious.

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## CHAPTER IV.

### CHURCH CENSURES.

177. The censures which may be inflicted by church courts are admonition, suspension, excommunication, and deposition. When a lower censure fails to reclaim the delinquent, it may become the duty of the court to proceed to the infliction of a higher censure.

178. Admonition is the formal reproof of an offender by a church court, warning him of his guilt and danger, and exhorting him to be more circumspect and watchful in the future.

179. Suspension, with respect to church members, is their temporary exclusion from sealing ordinances; with respect to church officers, it is their temporary exclusion from the exercise of their office. It may be either definite or indefinite as to its duration. Definite suspension is administered when the credit of religion, the honor of Christ, and the good of the delinquent demand it, even though he may have given satisfaction to the court. Indefinite suspension is the exclusion of an offender from sealing ordinances, or from his office, until he exhibits signs of repentance, or until, by his conduct, the necessity of the highest censure be made manifest.

180. Excommunication is the excision of an offender from the communion of the Church. This censure is to be inflicted only on account of gross crime or heresy, when the offender shows himself incorrigible and contumacious. The design of this censure is to operate on the offender as a means of reclaiming him, to deliver the Church from the scandal of his offence, and to inspire all with fear by the example of his discipline.

181. Deposition is the degradation of an officer from his office, and may or may not be accompanied with the infliction of other censure.

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## CHAPTER V.

### THE PARTIES IN CASES OF PROCESS.

182. Original jurisdiction in relation to Ministers of the Gospel pertains exclusively to the Presbytery, and in relation to other church members to the Session, unless the Session shall be unable to try the person or persons accused, in which case the Presbytery shall have the right of jurisdiction.

183. It is the duty of all church Sessions and Presbyteries to exercise care over those subject to their authority; and they shall, with due diligence and great discretion, demand from such persons satisfactory explanations concerning reports affecting their Christian character. This duty is more imperative when those who deem themselves aggrieved by injurious reports shall ask an investigation. If such investigation, however originating, should result in raising a strong presumption of the guilt of the party

involved, the court shall institute process, and shall appoint a prosecutor to prepare the indictment and to conduct the case. This prosecutor shall be a member of the court, except that, in a case before the Session, he may be any communing member of the same congregation with the accused.

184. The original and only parties in a case of process are the accuser and the accused. The accuser is always the Presbyterian Church in the United States, whose honor and purity are to be maintained. The prosecutor, whether voluntary or appointed, is always the representative of the Church, and as such has all its rights in the case. In appellate courts the parties are known as appellant and appellee.

185. Every indictment shall begin: "In the name of the Presbyterian Church in the United States," and shall conclude, "against the peace, unity and purity of the Church, and the honor and majesty of the Lord Jesus Christ as the King and Head thereof." In every case the Church is the injured and accusing party, against the accused.

186. An injured party shall not become a prosecutor of personal offences without



having tried the means of reconciliation and of reclaiming the offender, required by Christ: "Moreover, if thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone: if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother; but if he will not hear thee, then take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established." (Matt. xviii. 15, 16.) A church court, however, may judicially investigate personal offences as if general, when the interests of religion seem to demand it. So, also, those to whom private offences are known cannot become prosecutors, without having previously endeavored to remove the scandal by private means.

187. When the offence is general, the cause may be conducted either by any person appearing as prosecutor, or by a prosecutor appointed by the court.

188. When the prosecution is instituted by the court, the previous steps required by our Lord in the case of personal offences are not necessary. There are many cases, however, in which it will promote the in-

terests of religion to send a committee to converse in a private manner with the offender, and endeavor to bring him to a sense of his guilt, before instituting actual process.

189. Great caution ought to be exercised in receiving accusations from any person who is known to indulge a malignant spirit towards the accused; who is not of good character; who is himself under censure or process; who is deeply interested in any respect in the conviction of the accused; or who is known to be litigious, rash, or highly imprudent.

190. Every voluntary prosecutor shall be previously warned, that if he fail to show probable cause of the charges, he must himself be censured as a slanderer of the brethren, in proportion to the malignity or rashness manifested in the prosecution.

191. When a member of a church court is under process, all his official functions may be suspended, at its discretion; but this shall never be done in the way of censure.

192. In the discussion of all questions arising in his own case, the accused shall exercise the rights of defendant only, not of judge.

## CHAPTER VI.

GENERAL PROVISIONS APPLICABLE TO ALL  
CASES OF PROCESS.

193. It is incumbent on every member of a court of Jesus Christ engaged in a trial of offenders, to bear in mind the inspired injunction: "If a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual restore such an one in the spirit of meekness, considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted."

194. Process against an offender shall not be commenced unless some person or persons undertake to make out the charge; or unless the court finds it necessary, for the honor of religion, itself to take the step provided for in Chapter V., Paragraph 183.

195. When a charge is laid before the Session or Presbytery, it shall be reduced to writing, and nothing shall be done at the first meeting of the court, unless by consent of parties, except to appoint a prosecutor, and order the indictment to be drawn, a copy of which, with the witnesses then known to support it, shall be served on the accused, and to cite all parties and their witnesses to appear and be heard at another meeting, which

shall not be sooner than ten days after such citation; at which meeting of the court the charges shall be read to the accused, if present, and he shall be called upon to say whether he be guilty or not. If he confess, the court may deal with him according to its discretion; if he plead and take issue, the trial shall proceed. Accused parties may plead in writing when they cannot be personally present, and parties necessarily absent should have counsel assigned to them.

196. The citation shall be issued and signed by the Moderator or Clerk, by order and in the name of the court; he shall also issue citations to such witnesses as either party shall nominate to appear on his behalf.

197. In drawing the indictment, the times, places, and circumstances should, if possible, be particularly stated, that the accused may have an opportunity to make his defense.

198. When an accused person shall refuse to obey a citation, he shall be cited a second time; and this second citation shall be accompanied with a notice that if he do not appear at the time appointed (unless providentially hindered, which fact he must

make known to the court), or that if he appear and refuse to plead, he shall be dealt with for his contumacy, as hereinafter provided.

199. The time which must elapse between the serving of the first citation on the accused person, and the meeting of the court at which he is to appear, shall be at least ten days. But the time allotted for his appearance on the subsequent citation shall be left to the discretion of the court, provided that it be not less than is quite sufficient for a seasonable and convenient compliance with the citation.

200. When the offence with which an accused person stands charged took place at a distance, and it is inconvenient for the witnesses to appear before the court having jurisdiction, that court may either appoint a commission of its body, or request the co-ordinate court contiguous to the place where the facts occurred, to take the testimony for it. The accused shall always have reasonable notice of the time and place of the meeting of this commission or co-ordinate court.

201. When an offence, alleged to have been committed at a distance, is not likely

otherwise to become known to the court having jurisdiction, it shall be the duty of the court within whose bounds the facts occurred, after satisfying itself that there is probable ground of accusation, to send notice to the court having jurisdiction, which shall at once proceed against the accused; or the whole case may be remitted for trial to the co-ordinate court within whose bounds the offence is alleged to have been committed.

202. Before proceeding to trial, courts ought to ascertain that their citations have been duly served.

203. In every process, if deemed expedient, there may be a committee appointed, which shall be called the Judicial Committee, and whose duty it shall be to digest and arrange all the papers, and to prescribe, under the direction of the court, the whole order of the proceedings. The members of this committee shall be entitled, notwithstanding their performance of this duty, to sit and vote in the case as members of the court.

204. When the trial is about to begin, it shall be the duty of the Moderator solemnly to announce from the chair that the court is

about to pass to the consideration of the cause, and to enjoin on the members to recollect and regard their high character as judges of a court of Jesus Christ, and the solemn duty in which they are about to engage.

205. In order that the trial may be fair and impartial, the witnesses shall be examined in the presence of the accused, or at least after he shall have received due citation to attend. Witnesses may be cross-examined by both parties, and any questions asked which are pertinent to the issue.

206. On all questions arising in the progress of a trial, the discussion shall first be between the parties; and when they have been heard, they may be required to withdraw from the court until the members deliberate upon and decide the point.

207. When a court of first resort proceeds to the trial of a cause, the following order shall be observed: 1, The Moderator shall charge the court. 2, The indictment shall be read, and the answer of the accused heard. 3, The witnesses for the prosecutor and then those for the accused shall be examined. 4, The parties shall be heard; first,

the prosecutor, and then the accused, and the prosecutor shall close. 5, The roll shall be called, and the members may express their opinion in the cause. 6, The vote shall be taken, the verdict announced and judgment entered on the records.

208. Either party may, for cause, challenge the right of any member to sit in the trial of the case, which question shall be decided by the members of the court other than the one challenged.

209. Pending the trial of a case, any member of the court who shall express his opinion of its merits to either party, or to any person not a member of the court; or who shall absent himself from any sitting without the permission of the court, or satisfactory reasons rendered, shall be thereby disqualified from taking part in the subsequent proceedings.

210. The parties shall be allowed copies of the whole proceedings at their own expense, if they demand them. Minutes of the trial shall be kept by the Clerk, which shall exhibit the charges, the answer, all the testimony, and all such acts, orders, and decisions of the court relating to the case,



as either party may desire, and also the judgment. The Clerk shall, without delay, attach together the charges, the answer, the citations and returns thereto, and the minutes herein required to be kept. These papers, when so attached, shall constitute "the record of the case." When a case is removed by appeal or complaint, the lower court shall transmit "the record" thus prepared to the higher court with the addition of the notice of appeal or complaint, and the reasons thereof, if any shall have been filed. Nothing which is not contained in this "record" shall be taken into consideration in the higher court. On the final decision of a cause in a higher court, its judgment shall be sent down to the court in which the case originated.

211. No professional counsel shall be permitted as such to appear and plead in cases of process in any court; but an accused person may, if he desires it, be represented before the Session by any communing member of the same particular church; or before any other court, by any member of the court. A member of the court so employed shall not be allowed to sit in judgment in the case.

212. Process, in case of scandal, shall commence within the space of one year after the offence was committed, unless it has recently become flagrant. When, however, a church member shall commit an offence, after removing to a place far distant from his former residence, and where his connection with the church is unknown, in consequence of which circumstances process cannot be instituted within the time above specified, the recent discovery of the church membership of the individual shall be considered as equivalent to the offence itself having recently become flagrant. The same principle, in like circumstances, shall also apply to Ministers.

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## CHAPTER VII.

### SPECIAL RULES PERTAINING TO PROCESS BEFORE SESSIONS.

213. Process against all church members, other than Ministers of the Gospel, shall be entered before the Session of the church to which such members belong; except in cases in which the Session is rendered incapable of

exercising jurisdiction, in which case process shall be entered before the Presbytery.

214. When an accused person, having been twice duly cited, shall refuse to appear before the Session, or appearing, shall refuse to plead, the court shall enter upon its records the fact, together with the nature of the offence charged, and he shall be suspended from sealing ordinances for his contumacy. The censure may be made public should this be deemed expedient by the Session, and shall in no case be removed until the offender has not only repented of his contumacy, but has given satisfaction in relation to the charges against him.

215. If the charge be one of gross crime or heresy, and the accused persist in his contumacy, the court may proceed to inflict the highest censure.

216. When it is impracticable immediately to commence process against an accused church member, the Session may, if it think the edification of the Church requires it, prevent the accused from approaching the Lord's table until the charges against him can be examined.

## CHAPTER VIII.

SPECIAL RULES PERTAINING TO PROCESS  
AGAINST A MINISTER

217. Process against a Minister shall be entered before the Presbytery of which he is a member.

218. As no Minister ought, on account of his office, to be screened in his sin, or slightly censured, so scandalous charges ought not to be received against him on slight grounds.

219. If any one know a Minister to be guilty of a private offence, he should warn him in private. But if the offence be persisted in, or become public, he should bring the case to the attention of some other Minister of the Presbytery for his advice.

220. If a Minister accused of an offence, having been twice duly cited, shall refuse to appear before the Presbytery, he shall be immediately suspended. And if, after another citation, he shall still refuse to attend, he shall be deposed as contumacious, and suspended or excommunicated from the Church. Record shall be made of the judgment and

of the charges under which he was arraigned, and the sentence shall be made public.

221. Heresy and schism may be of such a nature as to warrant deposition; but errors ought to be carefully considered, whether they strike at the vitals of religion, and are industriously spread, or whether they arise from the weakness of the human understanding, and are not likely to do much injury.

222. If the Presbytery find on trial that the matter complained of amounts to no more than such acts of infirmity as may be amended, so that little or nothing remains to hinder the Minister's usefulness, it shall take all prudent measures to remove the scandal.

223. When a Minister, pending a trial, shall make confession, if the matter be base and flagitious, such as drunkenness, uncleanness, or crimes of a higher nature, however penitent he may appear to the satisfaction of all, the court shall, without delay, suspend him from the exercise of his office, or depose him from the ministry.

224. A Minister suspended or deposed for scandalous conduct shall not be restored,

even on the deepest sorrow for his sin, until he shall exhibit for a considerable time such an eminently exemplary, humble, and edifying walk and conversation as shall heal the wound made by his scandal. And a deposed Minister shall in no case be restored until it shall appear that the general sentiment of the Church is strongly in his favor, and demands his restoration; and then only by the court inflicting the censure, or with its consent.

225. When a Minister is deposed his church shall be declared vacant; but when he is suspended, it shall be left to the discretion of the Presbytery whether the censure shall include the dissolution of the pastoral relation.

226. Whenever a Minister of the Gospel shall habitually fail to be engaged in the regular discharge of his official functions, it shall be the duty of the Presbytery, at a stated meeting, to inquire into the cause of such dereliction, and if necessary, to institute judicial proceedings against him for breach of his covenant engagement. If it shall appear that his neglect proceeds only from his want of acceptance to the church, Presbytery may, upon the same principle

upon which it withdraws license from a licentiate for want of evidence of the divine call, divest him of his office without censure, even against his will, a majority of two-thirds being necessary for this purpose.

In such a case, the Clerk shall, under the order of the Presbytery, forthwith deliver to the individual concerned a written notice that, at the next stated meeting, the question of his being so dealt with is to be considered. This notice shall distinctly state the grounds for this proceeding. The party thus notified shall be heard in his own defense; and if the decision pass against him he may appeal, as if he had been tried after the usual forms.

This principle may apply, with any necessary changes, to Ruling Elders and Deacons.

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## CHAPTER IX.

### EVIDENCE.

227. All persons of proper age and intelligence are competent witnesses, except such as do not believe in the existence of God, or a future state of rewards and punishments. The accused party may be al-

lowed, but shall not be compelled, to testify; but the accuser shall be required to testify, on the demand of the accused. Either party has the right to challenge a witness whom he believes to be incompetent, and the court shall examine and decide upon his competency. It belongs to the court to judge of the degree of credibility to be attached to all evidence.

228. A husband or wife shall not be compelled to bear testimony the one against the other in any court.

229. The testimony of more than one witness shall be necessary in order to establish any charge; yet if, in addition to the testimony of one witness, corroborative evidence be produced, the offence may be considered to be proved.

230. No witness afterwards to be examined, except a member of the court, shall be present during the examination of another witness on the same case, if either party object.

231. Witnesses shall be examined first by the party introducing them; then cross-examined by the opposite party; after which any member of the court, or either party,



may put additional interrogatories. But no question shall be put or answered except by permission of the Moderator, subject to an appeal to the court; and the court shall not permit questions frivolous or irrelevant to the charge at issue.

232. The oath or affirmation to a witness shall be administered by the Moderator in the following or like terms: "You solemnly promise, in the presence of God, that you will declare the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, according to the best of your knowledge in the matter in which you are called to witness, as you shall answer it to the great Judge of the living and the dead." If, however, at any time a witness should present himself before a court, who for conscientious reasons prefers to swear or affirm in any other manner, he should be allowed to do so.

233. Every question put to a witness shall, if required, be reduced to writing. When answered, it shall, together with the answer, be recorded, if deemed by the court, or by either party, of sufficient importance, and the testimony of the witness shall be read to him for his approbation and subscription.

234. The records of a court, or any part of them, whether original or transcribed, if regularly authenticated by the Moderator and Clerk, or by either of them, shall be deemed good and sufficient evidence in every other court.

235. In like manner, testimony taken by one court, and regularly certified, shall be received by every other court as no less valid than if it had been taken by itself.

236. When it is not convenient for a court to have the whole, or perhaps any part of the testimony in any particular case, taken in its presence, a commission shall be appointed, or co-ordinate court requested, to take the testimony in question, which shall be considered as if taken in the presence of the court; of which commission or co-ordinate court, and of the time and place of its meeting, due notice shall be given to the opposite party, that he may have an opportunity of attending. And if the accused shall desire, on his part, to take testimony at a distance, for his own exculpation, he shall give notice to the court of the time and place at which it is proposed to take it that a commission or co-ordinate court, as

in the former case, may be appointed for the purpose. Or the testimony may be taken on written interrogatories, by filing the same with the Clerk of the court having jurisdiction of the case, and giving two weeks' notice thereof to the adverse party, during which time he may file cross-interrogatories, if he desire it; and the testimony shall then be taken by the commission or co-ordinate court in answer to the direct and cross-interrogatories, if such are filed, and no notice need be given of the time and place of taking the testimony.

237. A member of the court who has given testimony in a case becomes disqualified for sitting as a judge if either party makes objection.

238. An officer or private member of the church refusing to testify may be censured for contumacy.

239. If after trial before any court new testimony be discovered which the accused believes important, it shall be his right to ask a new trial and it shall be within the power of the court to grant his request.

240. If in the prosecution of an appeal, new testimony be offered, which, in the

judgment of the appellate court, has an important bearing on the case, it shall be competent for that court to refer the case to the lower court for a new trial; or, with the consent of parties, to take the testimony and proceed with the case.

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## CHAPTER X.

### THE INFLICTION OF CHURCH CENSURES.

241. When any member or officer of the church shall be found guilty of an offence the court shall proceed with all tenderness and shall deal with its offending brother in the spirit of meekness, the members considering themselves lest they also be tempted.

242. Church censures and the modes of administering them should be suited to the nature of the offences; for private offences censure should be administered in the presence of the court alone, or in private by one or more members of the court, but in the case of public offences, the degree of censure and mode of administering it shall be within the discretion of the court, acting in accordance with paragraphs below which deal with particular censures.

243. The censure of admonition should be administered in private by one or more members of the court if the offence is known only to a few and is not aggravated in character. If the offence is public the admonition should be administered by the Moderator in presence of the court and may also be announced in public should the court deem it expedient.

244. Definite suspension should be administered in the presence of the court alone, or in open session of the court, as it may deem best, and public announcement thereof shall be at the court's discretion.

245. Indefinite suspension should be administered after the manner prescribed for definite suspension, but with added solemnity, that it may be the means of impressing the mind of the delinquent with a proper sense of his danger, and under the blessing of God of leading him to repentance. When the court has resolved to pass this sentence, the Moderator shall address the offending brother to the following purpose :

“WHEREAS, You, A. B. (here describe the person as a Minister, Ruling Elder, Deacon, or private member of the church),

are convicted by sufficient proof [or, are guilty by your own confession], of the sin of—(here insert the offence), we, the Presbytery [or church Session] of C. D., in the name and by the authority of the Lord Jesus Christ, do now declare you suspended from the sacraments of the Church [and from the exercise of your office], until you give satisfactory evidence of repentance.”

To this shall be added such advice or admonition as may be judged necessary, and the whole shall be concluded with prayer to Almighty God that he would follow this act of discipline with his blessing.

246. Excommunication is to be administered according to one or other of the two modes laid down for indefinite suspension, or to be inflicted in public as the court may decide. In administering this censure the Moderator of the Session shall make a statement of the several steps which have been taken with respect to the offending brother, and of the decision to cut him off from the communion of the Church. He shall then show from Matthew XVIII. 15-18, and I Cor. V. 1-5, the authority of the Church to cast out unworthy members, and shall ex-

plain the nature, use, and consequences of this censure. He shall then administer the censure in the words following:

“WHEREAS, A. B., a member of this church, has been, by sufficient proof, convicted of the sin of ———, and after much admonition and prayer, obstinately refuses to hear the Church, and has manifested no evidence of repentance: Therefore, in the name and by the authority of the Lord Jesus Christ, we, the Session of the church of C. D., do pronounce him to be excluded from the sacraments, and cut off from the fellowship of the Church.”

Prayer shall then be made that by God's blessing this solemn action of the court may issue in the repentance and restoration of the offender, and in the establishment of all true believers.

247. The censure of deposition shall be administered by the Moderator in the words following:

“WHEREAS, A. B., a Minister of this Presbytery [or a Ruling Elder or Deacon of this church], has been proved, by sufficient evidence to be guilty of the sin of ———, we, the Presbytery [or church Session], of

C. D., do adjudge him disqualified for the office of the Christian ministry [or Ruling Eldership, or Deaconship], and therefore we do hereby, in the name and by the authority of the Lord Jesus Christ, depose from the office of a Christian Minister [or Ruling Elder, or Deacon], the said A. B., and do prohibit him from exercising any of the functions thereof." If the censure include suspension or excommunication, the Moderator shall proceed to say: "We do moreover, by the same authority, suspend the said A. B., from the sacraments of the Church, until he shall exhibit satisfactory evidence of sincere repentance," or "exclude the said A. B., from the sacraments, and cut him off from the fellowship of the Church."

The sentence of deposition ought to be inflicted with solemnities similar to those already prescribed in the case of excommunication.

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## CHAPTER XI.

### THE REMOVAL OF CENSURE.

248. After any person has been suspended from the sacraments, it is proper that the



rulers of the church should frequently converse with him as well as pray with him and for him, that it would please God to give him repentance.

249. When the court shall be satisfied as to the reality of the repentance of a suspended offender, he shall be admitted to profess his repentance, either in the presence of the court alone, or publicly, and be restored to the sacraments of the Church, and to his office, if such be the judgment of the court, which restoration shall be declared to the penitent in words of the following import:

“WHEREAS, You, A. B., have been debarred from the sacraments of the Church [and from the office of the gospel Ministry, or Ruling Eldership, or Deaconship], but have now manifested such repentance as satisfies the church, we, the Session (or Presbytery) of C. D., do hereby, in the name and by the authority of the Lord Jesus Christ, absolve you from the said sentence of suspension, and do restore you to the full communion of the Church [and the exercise of your said office, and all the functions thereof].”

After which there shall be prayer and thanksgiving.

250. When an excommunicated person shall be so affected with his state as to be brought to repentance, and to desire to be readmitted to the communion of the Church, the Session, having obtained sufficient evidence of his sincere penitence, shall proceed to restore him. This may be done in the presence of the court, or of the congregation as seems best to the Session.

On the day appointed for his restoration, the Minister shall call upon the excommunicated person, and propose to him in the presence of the court, or of the congregation, the following questions :

“Do you, from a deep sense of your great wickedness, freely confess your sin in thus rebelling against God, and in refusing to hear his Church; and do you acknowledge that you have been in justice and mercy cut off from the communion of the Church?

*Answer.*—I do. Do you now voluntarily profess your sincere repentance and contrition for your sin and obstinacy; and do you humbly ask the forgiveness of God and his Church? *Answer.*—I do. Do you sincerely

promise, through divine grace, to live in all humbleness of mind and circumspection; and to endeavor to adorn by a holy life the doctrine of God our Saviour? *Answer.*—I do.”

Here the Minister shall give the penitent a suitable exhortation, encouraging and comforting him. Then he shall pronounce the sentence of restoration in the following words:

“WHEREAS, You, A. B., have been shut out from the communion of the Church, but have now manifested such repentance as satisfies the Church; in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, and by his authority, we, the Session of this church, do declare you absolved from the sentence of excommunication formerly pronounced against you; and we do restore you to the communion of the Church, that you may be a partaker of all the benefits of the Lord Jesus to your eternal salvation.”

The whole shall be concluded with prayer and thanksgiving.

251. The restoration of a deposed officer, after public confession has been made in a manner similar to that prescribed in the case of the removal of censure from an excom-

municated person, shall be announced to him by the Moderator in the following form, namely:

“WHEREAS, You, A. B., formerly a Minister of this Presbytery [or a Ruling Elder, or Deacon of this church], have been deposed from your office, but have now manifested such repentance as satisfies the Church; in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, and by his authority, we, the Presbytery of C. D., [or the Session of this church], do declare you absolved from the said sentence of deposition formerly pronounced against you; and we do furthermore restore you to your said office, and to the exercise of all the functions thereof, whenever you may be orderly called thereto.”

After which there shall be prayer and thanksgiving, and the members of the court shall extend to him the right hand of fellowship.

252. When a Ruling Elder or Deacon has been absolved from the censure of deposition, he cannot be allowed to resume the exercise of his office in the church without re-election by the people.

253. When a person under censure shall remove to a part of the country remote from the court by which he was sentenced, and shall desire to profess repentance and obtain restoration, it shall be lawful for the court, if it deems it expedient, to transmit a certified copy of its proceedings to the Session (or Presbytery) where the delinquent resides, which shall take up the case and proceed with it as though it had originated with itself.

254. In the restoration of a Minister who has been suspended or deposed it is the duty of the Presbytery to proceed with great caution. It should first admit him to the sacraments, if he has been debarred from them, and afterwards should grant him the privilege of preaching on probation for a time, so as to test the sincerity of his repentance and the prospect of his usefulness, and when satisfied in these respects the Presbytery shall take steps to restore him to his office. But the case shall always be under judicial consideration until the sentence of restoration has been pronounced.

## CHAPTER XII.

## CASES WITHOUT PROCESS.

255. When any person shall come forward and make his offence known to the court, a full statement of the facts shall be recorded and judgment rendered without process.

256. If a communing member of the church against whom no charges are pending shall request the Session to transfer his name to the roll of non-communing members, it shall be in the power of the Session to grant the request, and this action may be announced to the congregation should this seem wise and proper. This transfer, however, should not be made until the Session, after inquiry and due delay, is of the judgment that the request does not spring from temporary doubt or special temptation.

257. A Minister of the Gospel against whom there are no charges, if fully satisfied in his own conscience that God has not called him to the ministry, or if he has satisfactory evidence of his inability to serve the Church with acceptance, may report these facts at a stated meeting of Presbytery. At the next

stated meeting, if after full deliberation the Presbytery shall concur with him in judgment, it may divest him of his office without censure. This provision shall in like manner apply with any necessary changes to the case of Ruling Elders and Deacons; but in all such cases the Session of the church to which the Ruling Elder or the Deacon who seeks demission belongs shall act as the Presbytery acts in similar cases where a Minister is concerned.

258. When a member or officer shall renounce the communion of this Church by joining some other evangelical Church, if in good standing, the irregularity shall be recorded, and his name erased. But if charges are pending against him, they shall be communicated to the church which he has joined. If the denomination be heretical, an officer shall have his name stricken from the roll, and all authority to exercise his office derived from this Church shall be withdrawn from him; but a private member shall not be otherwise noticed than as above prescribed.

## CHAPTER XIII.

MODES IN WHICH THE PROCEEDINGS OF  
LOWER COURTS COME UNDER THE SUPER-  
VISION OF HIGHER COURTS.

259. The acts and decisions of a lower court are brought under the supervision of a higher court in one or another of the following modes :

(1) Review and Control; (2) Reference; (3) Appeal; (4) Complaint.

260. When the proceedings of a lower court are before a higher court the members of the lower court shall not lose the right to sit, deliberate, and vote in the higher court, except in cases of appeal or complaint.

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CHAPTER XIV.

GENERAL REVIEW AND CONTROL.

261. It is the right and duty of every court above the Session to review, at least once a year, the records of the court next below, and if any lower court fails to present its records for this purpose, the higher court may require them to be produced immediately, or at any time fixed by this higher court.



262. In reviewing records of a lower court the higher court is to examine :

(1) Whether the proceedings have been correctly recorded; (2) whether they have been regular and in accordance with the Constitution; (3) whether they have been wise, equitable, and suited to promote the welfare of the Church; (4) whether the lawful injunctions of the higher court have been obeyed.

263. It is ordinarily sufficient for the higher court merely to record in its own minutes and in the records reviewed, whether it approves, disapproves, or corrects the records in any particular; but should any serious irregularity be discovered the higher court may require its review and correction by the lower. Proceedings in judicial cases, however, shall not be dealt with under review and control when notice of appeal or complaint has been given the lower court; and no judgment of a lower court in a judicial case shall be reversed except by appeal or complaint.

264. Courts may sometimes entirely neglect to perform their duty, by which neglect heretical opinions or corrupt practices

may be allowed to gain ground ; or offenders of a very gross character may be suffered to escape ; or some circumstances in their proceedings of very great irregularity may not be distinctly recorded by them ; in any of which cases their records will by no means exhibit to the higher court a full view of their proceedings. If, therefore, the next higher court be well advised that any such neglect or irregularity has occurred on the part of the lower court, it is incumbent on it to take cognizance of the same, and to examine, deliberate, and judge in the whole matter as completely as if it had been recorded, and thus brought up by the review of the records.

265. When any court having appellate jurisdiction shall be advised, either by the records of the court next below or by memorial, either with or without protest, or by any other satisfactory method, of any important delinquency or grossly unconstitutional proceedings of such court, the first step shall be to cite the court alleged to have offended to appear by representative or in writing, at a specified time and place, and to show what it has done or failed to do in the

case in question. The court thus issuing the citation may reverse or redress the proceedings of the court below in other than judicial cases; or it may censure the delinquent court; or it may remit the whole matter to the delinquent court, with an injunction to take it up and dispose of it in a constitutional manner; or it may stay all further proceedings in the case; as circumstances may require.

266. In process against a lower court, the trial shall be conducted according to the rules provided for process against individuals, so far as they may be applicable.

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## CHAPTER XV.

### REFERENCES.

267. A reference is a written representation and application made by a lower court to a higher for advice, or other action, on a matter pending before the lower court, and is ordinarily to be made to the next higher court.

268. Among proper subjects for reference are matters that are new, delicate, or difficult; or on which the members of the lower

court are very seriously divided; or which relate to questions involving the Constitution and legal procedure respecting which the lower court feels the need of guidance.

269. In making a reference the lower court may ask for advice only, or for final disposition of the matter referred; and in particular it may refer a judicial case with request for its trial and decision by the higher court.

270. A reference may be presented to the higher court by one or more representatives appointed by the lower court for this purpose, and it should be accompanied with so much of the record as shall be necessary for proper understanding and consideration of the matter referred.

271. Although references are sometimes proper, yet in general it is better that every court should discharge the duty assigned it under the law of the Church.

A higher court is not required to accede to the request of the lower, but it should ordinarily give advice when so requested.

272. When a court makes a reference, it ought to have all the testimony and other

documents duly prepared, produced, and in perfect readiness, so that the higher court may be able to fully consider and issue the case with as little difficulty or delay as possible.

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## CHAPTER XVI.

### APPEALS.

273. An appeal is the transfer to a higher court of a judicial case on which judgment has been rendered in a lower court, and is allowable only to the party against whom the decision has been rendered. The parties shall be known as the appellant and appellee. An appeal cannot be made to any court other than the next higher, except with its consent.

274. Only those who have submitted to a regular trial are entitled to an appeal. Those who have not submitted to a regular trial are not entitled to an appeal.

275. The grounds of appeal are such as the following: any irregularity in the proceedings of the lower court; refusal of reasonable indulgence to a party on trial; receiving improper, or declining to receive

proper, evidence; hurrying to a decision before all the testimony is taken; manifestation of prejudice in the case; and mistake or injustice in the judgment and censure.

276. Notice of appeal, with the reasons supporting it, shall be given the court before its rising, or shall within ten days thereafter be filed with the Moderator or Clerk of the court.

277. The appellant shall lodge his appeal and the reasons therefor with the Clerk of the higher court before the close of the second day of its sessions. It shall be the duty of the Clerk of the lower court to file with the Clerk of the higher court within the same time a copy of all the proceedings in connection with the case, including the notice of appeal and reasons therefor, the evidence, and any papers bearing on the case, which together shall be known as "the record of the case," and the higher court shall not admit or consider anything not found in this "record," without consent of the parties in the case.

278. Notice of appeal shall have the effect of suspending the judgment of the lower

court until the case has been finally decided in the higher court. If, however, the censure is suspension or excommunication from the sealing ordinances, or deposition from office, the court may, for sufficient reasons duly recorded, put the censure into effect until the case is finally decided.

279. After a higher court has decided that an appeal is in order and should be entertained by the court, the following procedure is to be adopted: (1) The reading of the complete record of the case, except any part of it that may be omitted by consent of the parties and the court itself; (2) the parties shall be heard, the appellant having the right of opening and closing the argument; (3) opportunity shall be given the members of the appellate court to express their opinions; (4) the vote shall then be taken, without further debate, on each specification in this form: "Shall this specification of error be sustained?" If the court deems it wise, it may adopt a minute explanatory of its action, which shall become a part of its record in the case.

280. The decision of the higher court may be to confirm or to reverse, in whole or in

part, the judgment of the lower court; or to remit the case to the lower court for the purpose of amending the record, should it appear incorrect or defective; or to send the case back for a new trial. In every case a full record shall be made, and a copy of it shall be sent to the lower court.

281. An appellant shall be considered to have abandoned his appeal, if he does not appear before the higher court in person, or by counsel, by the second day of its meeting next ensuing the date of his notice of appeal, and the judgment of the lower court will stand, unless he can give the court satisfactory explanation of his failure to appear and prosecute the appeal.

282. If an appellant manifests a litigious or otherwise unchristian spirit in the prosecution of his appeal, he shall receive a suitable rebuke by the appellate court.

283. If a lower court shall neglect to send up "the record of the case," or any part of it, to the injury of the appellant, it shall receive a proper rebuke from the higher court, and the judgment from which the appeal has been taken shall be suspended, until



“the record” is produced upon which the issue can be fairly tried.

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## CHAPTER XVII.

### COMPLAINTS.

284. A complaint is a written representation made to a higher court against some act or decision of a lower court. It is the right of any communing member of the church in good standing to make complaint against any action of a lower court to whose jurisdiction he is subject, except that no complaint is allowable in a judicial case in which an appeal is taken. A complaint shall not be made to any other court than the next higher, except with its consent.

285. Notice of complaint shall not have the effect of suspending the action against which the complaint is made, unless one-third of the members present when the action was taken shall vote for its suspension until the final decision in the higher court.

286. The court against which complaint is made shall appoint one or more representatives to defend its action, and the parties

in the case shall be known as complainant and respondent.

287. The provisions relating to an appeal found in paragraphs 276, 277, 278, 279, 281, 282, 283, and paragraphs 289, 292, shall, with any necessary changes, apply to a complaint.

288. The higher court has power, in its discretion, to annul the whole, or any part, of the action of a lower court against which complaint has been made, or to send the matter back to the lower court with instructions for a new hearing.

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## CHAPTER XVIII.

### VOTING IN APPEALS AND COMPLAINTS.

289. In voting upon a complaint, the vote shall be either to sustain, to sustain in part, or not to sustain.

290. The effect of a vote to sustain shall be to sustain each and all of the items or counts of the complaint; that of a vote not to sustain shall be to annul each and all of the items or counts of the complaint; and that of a vote to sustain in part shall be to

sustain one or more specific items or counts of the complaint.

291. Those voting to sustain in part shall be required when voting to state what item or items, count or counts of the complaint they desire to sustain.

292. In making up the vote on the complaint only those items or counts shall be declared to be sustained for the sustaining of which a majority of the votes cast has been given.

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## CHAPTER XIX.

### DISSENTS AND PROTESTS.

293. A dissent is a declaration on the part of one or more members of a minority in a court, expressing a different opinion from that of the majority in a particular case. A dissent unaccompanied with reasons shall be entered on the records of the court.

294. A protest is a more solemn and formal declaration by members of a minority, bearing their testimony against what they deem a mischievous or erroneous judgment, and is generally accompanied with a detail of the reasons on which it is founded.

295. If a protest or dissent be couched in temperate language, and be respectful to the court, it shall be recorded; and the court may, if deemed necessary, put an answer to the protest on the records along with it. But here the matter shall end, unless the parties protesting obtain permission to withdraw their protest absolutely, or for the sake of amendment.

296. None can join in a protest against a decision of any court except those who had a right to vote in the case.

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## CHAPTER XX.

### JURISDICTION.

297. When a church member shall remove his residence beyond the bounds of the congregation of which he is a member, so that he can no longer regularly attend its services, it shall be his duty to transfer his membership by presenting a certificate of dismissal from the Session of the church of which he is a member to the church with which he wishes to unite. When the church of which he is a member has no Session, or for other good reasons it seems impossible

for the member to secure a certificate of dismissal, he may be received by the Session upon other satisfactory testimonials, in which case the church of which he was a member shall be duly notified.

298. When a church member shall remove his residence beyond the bounds of the church of which he is a member into the bounds of another, it shall be the duty of the Pastor and Ruling Elders of the church of which he is a member, as far as possible, to continue pastoral oversight of him and to inform him that according to the teaching of our Book of Church Order it is his duty to transfer his membership as soon as practicable to the church in whose bounds he is living. It shall also be the duty of the Pastor and Ruling Elders of the church from whose bounds the member moved to notify the Pastor and Ruling Elders of the church into whose bounds he has moved and request them to take pastoral oversight of the member, with a view to having him transfer his membership. If a member, after having thus been advised, shall neglect for twelve months to have his membership transferred, his name shall be retired by the

Session to a separate Roll for Non-Resident Members and he shall be notified. The name of any member whose residence has been unknown for two years to the Session shall be retired by the Session to a separate Roll for Retired Members, and the names on this retired roll shall not be reported to the Presbytery in the annual statistical report as a part of the total membership of the church. If a person on the retired roll shall apply for a letter of dismissal, the Session may use its discretion in granting it. The name of any member who has resided without the bounds of the church for one year, and who does not in any way support the church or manifest any interest in it, and who refuses to remove his membership to another church, may be placed on this same retired roll.

299. Members of one church dismissed to join another shall be held to be under the jurisdiction of the Session dismissing them until they form a regular connection with that to which they have been dismissed.

300. When a Presbytery shall dismiss a Minister, licentiate, or candidate, the name of the Presbytery to which he is dismissed shall be given in the certificate, and he shall

remain under the jurisdiction of the Presbytery dismissing him until received by the other.

301. No certificate of dismissal from either a Session or a Presbytery shall be valid testimony of good standing for a longer period than one year, unless its earlier presentation be hindered by some providential cause; and such certificates given to persons who have left the bounds of the Session or Presbytery granting them, shall certify the standing of such persons only to the time of their leaving those bounds.

302. When a Presbytery shall divest a Minister of his office without censure, or depose him without excommunication, it shall assign him to membership in some particular church, subject to the approval of the Session of that church.





PART III.

Directory for Worship



# THE

## Directory for the Worship of God in the

### PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN THE UNITED STATES.

ADOPTED 1894

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#### CHAPTER I.

##### OF THE SANCTIFICATION OF THE LORD'S DAY.

303.—I. It is the duty of every person to remember the Lord's day; and to prepare for it before its approach. All worldly business should be so ordered, and seasonably laid aside, as that they may not be hindered thereby from sanctifying the Sabbath, as the Holy Scriptures require.

304.—II. The whole day is to be kept holy to the Lord; and to be employed in the public and private exercises of religion. Therefore, it is requisite, that there be a holy

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\*The Scripture warrant for what is specified in the various articles of this Directory will be found at large in the Confession of Faith and Catechisms, in the places where the subjects are treated in a doctrinal way.

resting, all the day, from unnecessary labors; and an abstaining from those recreations which may be lawful on other days; and also, as much as possible, from worldly thoughts and conversation.

305.—III. Let the provisions for the support of the family on that day be so ordered that servants or others be not improperly detained from the public worship of God, nor hindered from sanctifying the Sabbath.

306.—IV. Let every person and family, in the morning, by secret and private prayer, for themselves and others, especially for the assistance of God to their minister, and for a blessing upon his ministry, by reading the Scriptures, and by holy meditation, prepare for communion with God in his public ordinances.

307.—V. Let the people be careful to assemble at the appointed time; that, being all present at the beginning, they may unite, with one heart, in all the parts of public worship; and let none unnecessarily depart till after the blessing be pronounced.

308.—VI. Let the time after the solemn services of the congregation in public are over be spent in prayer, in devotional read-

ing, and especially in the study of the Scriptures, meditation, catechising, religious conversation, the singing of psalms, hymns, or spiritual songs; visiting the sick, relieving the poor, teaching the ignorant, and in performing such like duties of piety, charity, and mercy.

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## CHAPTER II.

OF THE ASSEMBLING OF THE CONGREGATION,  
AND THEIR BEHAVIOR DURING DIVINE SERVICE.

309.—I. When the time appointed for public worship is come, let the people enter the church, and having taken their seats in a decent, grave and reverent manner, engage in silent prayer for a blessing upon themselves, the minister and all present, as well as upon others who are detained from the house of God.

310.—II. In time of public worship, let all the people attend with gravity and reverence; forbearing to read anything except what the minister is then reading or citing; abstaining from all whisperings, from salutations of persons present or coming in; and

from gazing about, sleeping, smiling, and all other improper behavior. It is highly important that children should be with their parents, and that the members of a family should sit together in the house of God.

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## CHAPTER III.

### OF THE PUBLIC READING OF THE HOLY SCRIPTURES.

311.—I. The reading of the Holy Scriptures in the congregation is a part of the public worship of God, and ought to be performed by the minister or some other authorized person.

312.—II. The Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments shall be read from the most approved translation, in the vulgar tongue, that all may hear and understand.

313.—III. How large a portion shall be read at once is left to the discretion of every minister; and he may, when he thinks it expedient, expound any part of what is read; always having regard to the time, that neither reading, singing, praying, preaching, nor any other ordinance, be disproportionate

the one to the other ; nor the whole rendered too short, or too tedious.

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## CHAPTER IV.

### OF THE SINGING OF PSALMS AND HYMNS.

314.—I. It is the duty of Christians to praise God by singing psalms or hymns publicly in the church, as also privately in the family.

315.—II. In singing the praises of God, we are to sing with the spirit, and with the understanding also, making melody in our hearts unto the Lord. It is also proper that we cultivate some knowledge of the rules of music, that we may praise God in a becoming manner with our voices, as well as with our hearts. The whole congregation should be furnished with books, and ought to join in this part of worship.

316.—III. The proportion of the time of public worship to be spent in singing is left to the prudence of every minister ; and it is recommended that this part of divine service be conducted in such a manner as to encourage congregational singing.

## CHAPTER V.

## OF PUBLIC PRAYER

317.—I. It seems very proper to begin the public worship of the sanctuary by a short prayer; humbly adoring the infinite majesty of the living God; expressing a sense of our distance from him as creatures, and our unworthiness as sinners; and humbly imploring his gracious presence, the assistance of his Holy Spirit in the duties of his worship, and his acceptance of us through the merits of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

318.—II. Then, after singing a psalm, or hymn, it is proper that, before sermon, there should be a full and comprehensive prayer: *First*, Adoring the glory and perfections of God, as they are made known to us in the works of creation, in the conduct of Providence, and in the clear and full revelation he hath made of himself in his written word; *Second*, Giving thanks to him for all his mercies of every kind, general and particular, spiritual and temporal, common and special; above all, for Christ Jesus, his unspeakable gift, the hope of eternal life



through him, and for the mission and work of the Holy Spirit; *Third*, Making humble confession of sin, both original and actual, acknowledging, and endeavoring to impress the mind of every worshipper with a deep sense of the evil of all sin, as such, as being a departure from the living God; and also taking a particular and affecting view of the various fruits which proceed from this root of bitterness; as sins against God, our neighbor and ourselves; sins in thought, in word and in deed; sins secret and presumptuous; sins accidental and habitual. Also, the aggravations of sin, arising from knowledge, or the means of it; from distinguishing mercies; from valuable privileges; from breach of vows, &c.; *Fourth*, Making earnest supplication for the pardon of sin, and peace with God, through the blood of the atonement, with all its important and happy fruits; for the Spirit of sanctification, and abundant supplies of the grace that is necessary to the discharge of our duty; for support and comfort, under all the trials to which we are liable, as we are sinful and mortal; and for all temporal mercies that may be necessary in our passage through this

valley of tears; always remembering to view them as flowing in the channel of covenant love, and intended to be subservient to the preservation and progress of the spiritual life; *Fifth*, Pleading from every principle warranted in Scripture; from our own necessity; the all-sufficiency of God; the merit and intercession of our Saviour; and the glory of God in the comfort and happiness of his people; *Sixth*, Intercession and petition for others, including the whole world of mankind; for the outpouring of the Holy Spirit upon all flesh; for the peace, purity, and extension of the church of God; for ministers and missionaries in all lands; for all who are persecuted for righteousness' sake; for the particular church then assembled, and all other churches associated in one body with it; for the sick, dying, and bereaved; for the poor and destitute; for strangers, for prisoners, the aged and the young; for those who travel by land and sea; for the community in which the church is situated; for civil rulers, and for whatever else may seem to be necessary or suitable to the occasion. The prominence given

each of these topics must be left to the discretion of the minister.

319.—III. Prayer after sermon ought generally to have a relation to the subject that has been treated of in the discourse; and all other public prayers to the circumstances that gave occasion for them.

320.—IV. It is easy to perceive, that in all the preceding directions there is a very great compass and variety; and it is committed to the judgment and fidelity of the officiating pastor to insist chiefly on such parts, or to take in more or less of the several parts, as he shall be led to by the aspect of Providence; the particular state of the congregation in which he officiates; or the disposition and exercise of his own heart at the time. But we think it necessary to observe, that although we do not approve, as is well known, of confining ministers to set or fixed forms of prayer for public worship, yet it is the indispensable duty of every minister, previously to his entering on his office, to prepare and qualify himself for this part of his duty, as well as for preaching. He ought, by a thorough acquaintance with the Holy Scriptures, by reading the

best writers on the subject, by meditation, and by a life of communion with God, to endeavor to acquire both the spirit and the gift of prayer. Not only so, but when he is to enter on particular acts of worship, he should endeavor to compose his spirit, and to digest his thoughts for prayer, that it may be performed with dignity and propriety, as well as to the profit of those who join in it; and that he may not disgrace that important service by mean, irregular, or extravagant effusions.

321.—V. The posture of the people in public prayer should always be reverent, and as far as possible uniform. The standing posture is sanctioned by Scripture, and is recommended by the practice of the primitive church, and by immemorial usage of Presbyterians.

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## CHAPTER VI.

### OF THE PREACHING OF THE WORD.

322.—I. The preaching of the word being an institution of God for the salvation of men, great attention should be paid to the

manner of performing it. Every minister ought to give diligent application to it; and endeavor to prove himself a workman that needeth not to be ashamed; rightly dividing the word of truth.

323.—II. The subject of a sermon should be some verse or verses of Scripture, and its object, to explain, defend and apply some part of the system of divine truth; or to point out the nature, and state the bounds and obligation, of some duty. A text should not be merely a motto, but should fairly contain the doctrine proposed to be handled. It is proper also that large portions of Scripture be sometimes expounded, and particularly improved, for the instruction of the people in the meaning and use of the Sacred Oracles.

324.—III. The method of preaching requires much study, meditation, and prayer. Ministers ought, in general, to prepare their sermons with care, and not to indulge themselves in loose, extemporary harangues; nor to serve God with that which cost them naught. They ought, however, to keep to the simplicity of the gospel, expressing themselves in language agreeable to Scrip-

ture, and adapted to the understanding of the meanest of their hearers, carefully avoiding ostentation, either of gifts or learning. They ought also to adorn, by their lives, the doctrine which they teach; and to be examples to the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity.

325.—IV. As one primary design of public ordinances is to pay social acts of homage to the most high God, ministers ought to be careful not to make their sermons so long as to interfere with or exclude the important duties of prayer and praise; but preserve a just proportion between the several parts of public worship.

326.—V. The sermon being ended, the minister is to pray, and return thanks to Almighty God; then let a psalm or hymn be sung, and the assembly dismissed with the apostolic benediction.

327.—VI. It is both a privilege and a duty plainly enjoined in Scripture to make regular, systematic, and liberal offerings for the support of religion, and for the propagation of the gospel in our own and in foreign lands, as well as for the relief of the poor.

This should be done as an exercise of grace and an act of worship, and at such time during the service as may be deemed expedient by the Session.

328.—VII. It is expedient that no person be introduced to preach in any of the churches under our care, without the consent of the pastor or church Session, unless sent by the Presbytery.

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## CHAPTER VII.

### THE SABBATH SCHOOL.

329.—I. The exercises appropriate to the Sabbath-school are prayer, singing praise to God, the study of the Holy Scriptures, the Confession of Faith, together with the Catechisms of the Church and the Book of Church Order, and offerings for religious purposes, especially for the work of missions. But its services must not be allowed to interfere with attendance upon the regular public worship of the Lord's day, on the one hand, nor with parental instruction on the other; and the school is always to be

under the supervision and control of the Session.

330.—II. The superintendent should promptly open the school at the appointed hour, and throughout the time allotted should have the general oversight of the classes, seeing that every class is supplied with a competent teacher, that proper behavior is maintained by the teachers and scholars, and endeavoring so to conduct the exercises as to give them spirit and attractiveness, and at the same time to preserve their devotional character.

331.—III. It is the duty of teachers to carefully prepare for their work, by study, meditation, and prayer; to speak to the unconverted among their scholars on the subject of their personal salvation; to visit them in their homes, especially when they are in sickness or trouble, and to pray for God's blessing upon them. It is of great importance that the teachers be in their places promptly at the opening of the school, and that they encourage punctuality on the part of their scholars.

332.—IV. The custom of persons leaving off attendance on the Sabbath-school when



they attain to maturity is not to be commended, and it is eminently desirable that, as far as possible, the whole congregation be engaged in the Sabbath-school work, either as officers, teachers, scholars, or visitors. The formation of adult classes for the study of the Scriptures is earnestly recommended.

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## CHAPTER VIII.

### PRAYER MEETINGS.

333.—I. Meetings of the congregation for prayer should be held under the direction of the session. They may be maintained, either statedly where that is possible, or at seasons specially appointed where the scattered condition of the congregation renders stated meetings impracticable. Such meetings should be conducted by the pastor, some other member of the Session, or any duly qualified member of the church; and the exercises should be prayer, praise, the reading of the Scriptures, and exhortation.

334.—II. It is earnestly recommended that the male members be encouraged to lead in public prayer, and that they be careful to make their prayers devotional and of a moderate length.

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## CHAPTER IX.

### OF THE ADMINISTRATION OF BAPTISM.

#### *The Baptism of Infants.*

335.—I. Baptism is not to be unnecessarily delayed; nor to be administered, in any case, by any private person; but by a minister of Christ, called to be the steward of the mysteries of God.

336.—II. It is usually to be administered in the church, in the presence of the congregation.

337.—III. After previous notice is given to the Minister, the child to be baptized is to be presented, by one or both the parents, signifying their desire that the child may be baptized.

338.—IV. Before baptism, let the Minister use some words of instruction, respect-

ing the institution, nature, use and ends of this ordinance; showing:

“That it is instituted by Christ; that it is a seal of the righteousness of faith; that the seed of the faithful have no less a right to this ordinance, under the gospel, than the seed of Abraham to circumcision, under the Old Testament; that Christ commanded all nations to be baptized; that he blessed little children, declaring that of such is the kingdom of heaven; that the promise of the gospel is to the believer and his house; that household baptism was practiced by the apostles; that we are, by nature, sinful, guilty, and polluted, and have need of cleansing, by the blood of Christ, and by the sanctifying influences of the Spirit of God.”

The Minister is also to exhort the parents to the careful performance of their duty; requiring,

“That they teach the child to read the Word of God; that they instruct it in the principles of our holy religion, as contained in the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments, an excellent summary of which we have in the Confession of Faith, and in the

Larger and Shorter Catechisms of the Westminster Assembly, which are to be recommended to them, as adopted by the church, for their direction and assistance, in the discharge of this important duty; that they pray with and for it; that they set an example of piety and godliness before it; and endeavor, by all the means of God's appointment, to bring up their child in the nurture and admonition of the Lord."

339.—V. The minister may then propose the following, or like questions:

(1) Do you acknowledge your child's need of the cleansing blood of Jesus Christ, and the renewing grace of the Holy Spirit?

(2) Do you claim God's covenant promises in [*his*] behalf, and do you look in faith to the Lord Jesus Christ for [*his*] salvation, as you do for your own?

(3) Do you now unreservedly dedicate your child to God, and promise, in humble reliance upon divine grace, that you will endeavor to set before [*him*] a godly example, that you will pray with and for [*him*], that you will teach [*him*] the doctrines of our holy religion, and that you will strive, by all the means of God's appointment, to

bring [*him*] up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord?

340.—VI. Then the Minister is to pray for a blessing to attend this ordinance; after which, calling the child by name, he shall say,

“I baptize thee in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.”

As he pronounces these words, he is to baptize the child with water, by pouring or sprinkling it on the face of the child, without adding any other ceremony; and the whole shall be concluded with prayer.

Although it is proper that baptism be administered in the presence of the congregation, yet there may be cases when it will be expedient to administer this ordinance in private houses; of which the minister is to be the judge.

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## CHAPTER X.

### OF THE ADMISSION OF PERSONS TO SEALING ORDINANCES.

341.—I. Children born within the pale of the visible church, and dedicated to God in baptism, are under the inspection and gov-

ernment of the church, and are to be taught to read and repeat the Catechism, the Apostle's Creed, and the Lord's Prayer. They are to be taught to pray, to abhor sin, to fear God, and to love and obey the Lord Jesus Christ. And when they come to years of discretion, they ought to be urgently reminded that they are members of the church by birthright, and that it is their duty and privilege personally to accept Christ, confess him before men, and seek admission to the Lord's supper.

342.—II. The time when young persons come to years of discretion cannot be precisely fixed. This must be left to the prudence of the Session of the church, whose office it is to judge, after careful examination, of the qualifications of those who apply for admission to sealing ordinances.

343.—III. When unbaptized persons apply for admission into the church, they shall, in ordinary cases, after giving satisfaction with respect to their knowledge and piety, make a public profession of their faith, in the presence of the congregation, and thereupon be baptized.

344.—IV. It is recommended, as edifying and proper, that baptized persons, when admitted by the Session to the Lord's supper, make a public profession of their faith in the presence of the congregation. But in all cases, there should be a clear recognition of their previous relation to the church as baptized members.

345.—V. (1) The time having come for the making of a public profession, and those who have been approved by the session having taken their places in the presence of the congregation, the minister may state that,—

Of the number of those who were baptized in infancy as members of the church of God by birthright, and heirs of the covenant promises, and who were then dedicated to God by their parents in solemn vows, the session has examined and approved as to [*their*] faith in Christ, and knowledge to discern the Lord's body, A, B, and C, who [*come*] now to assume for [*themselves*] the full privileges and responsibilities of [*their*] inheritance in the household of faith.

(2) If there be present any candidates for baptism, the Minister may state that,—

As applicants for admission into the church of God by baptism, which is a sign and seal of our engrafting into Christ, and of our engagement to be the Lord's the session has examined and approved as to [*their*] personal experience of divine grace, and [*their*] acceptance of Christ, D, E, and F, who [*are*] cordially welcomed into the goodly fellowship of the saints.

(3) The Minister may then address those making a profession in the following terms :

[*All of*] you being here present to make a public profession of faith, are to assent to the following declarations and promises, by which you enter into a solemn covenant with God and his Church :

1. Do you acknowledge yourselves to be sinners in the sight of God, justly deserving his displeasure, and without hope save in his sovereign mercy ?

2. Do you believe in the Lord Jesus Christ as the Son of God, and Saviour of sinners, and do you receive and rest upon him alone for salvation as he is offered in the gospel ?

3. Do you now resolve and promise, in humble reliance upon the grace of the Holy



Spirit, that you will endeavor to walk as becometh the followers of Christ, forsaking all sin, and conforming your life to his teaching and example?

4. Do you submit yourselves to the government and discipline of the church, and promise to study its purity and peace?

The minister may now briefly admonish those making a profession of faith as to the importance of the solemn obligations they have assumed; then baptism may be administered, if there be present any candidates for the ordinance; and the whole concluded with prayer.

346.—VI. When persons are received from other churches by letters of dismission, their names are to be announced to the congregation, with a recommendation of them to its Christian confidence and affection.

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## CHAPTER XI.

### OF THE ADMINISTRATION OF THE LORD'S SUPPER.

347.—I. The Communion, or Supper of the Lord, is to be celebrated frequently; but how often may be determined by the session

of each congregation, as they may judge most for edification.

348.—II. The ignorant and scandalous are not to be admitted to the Lord's supper.

349.—III. It is proper that public notice should be given to the congregation, at least the Sabbath before the administration of this ordinance, and that, either then, or on some day of the week, the people be instructed in its nature, and a due preparation for it, that all may come in a suitable manner to this holy feast.

350.—IV. When the sermon is ended, the Minister shall show,

“That this is an ordinance of Christ; by reading the words of institution, either from one of the evangelists, or from I Corinthians xi., which, as to him may appear expedient, he may explain and apply; that it is to be observed in remembrance of Christ, to show forth his death till he come; that it is of inestimable benefit, to strengthen his people against sin; to support them under troubles; to encourage and quicken them in duty; to inspire them with love and zeal; to increase their faith, and holy resolution; and to beget

peace of conscience, and comfortable hopes of eternal life."

He is to warn the profane, the ignorant, and scandalous, and those that secretly indulge themselves in any known sin, not to approach the holy table. On the other hand, he shall invite to this holy table such as, sensible of their lost and helpless state of sin, depend upon the atonement of Christ for pardon and acceptance with God; such as, being instructed in the gospel doctrine, have a competent knowledge to discern the Lord's body, and such as desire to renounce their sins, and are determined to lead a holy and godly life.

Since, by our Lord's appointment, this sacrament sets forth the communion of saints, the Minister, before the celebration begins, should invite all those who profess the true religion, and are communicants in good standing in any evangelical church, to participate in the ordinance. It is proper also to give a special invitation to non-communicants to remain during the service.

351.—V. The table, on which the elements are placed, being decently covered, and furnished with bread and wine, and the com-

municants orderly and gravely sitting around it (or in their seats before it), the Elders in a convenient place together, the Minister should then set the elements apart, by prayer and thanksgiving.

The bread and wine being thus set apart by prayer and thanksgiving, the Minister is to take the bread, and break it, in the view of the people, saying: \*

“Our Lord Jesus Christ, on the same night in which he was betrayed, having taken bread, and blessed and broken it, gave it to his disciples; as I, ministering in his name, give this bread unto you; saying [here the bread is to be distributed], Take, eat; this is my body, which is broken for you: this do in remembrance of me.”

After having given the bread, he shall take the cup, and say—

“After the same manner our Saviour also took the cup, and having given thanks, as hath been done in his name, he gave it to the disciples saying [while the minister is repeating these words let him give the cup], This cup is the new testament in my blood, which is shed for many, for the remission of sins: drink all ye of it.”

For the sake of order it is recommended that the minister be served after the people, and that he then serve the elders.

352.—VI. Since believers are to act personally in all their covenanting with the Lord, it is proper that a part of the time occupied in the distribution of the elements should be spent by all in silent communion, thanksgiving, intercession and prayer.

353.—VII. The minister may, in a few words, put the communicants in mind :

“Of the grace of God, in Jesus Christ, held forth in this sacrament; and of their obligation to be the Lord’s; and may exhort them to walk worthy of the vocation wherewith they are called; and, as they have professedly received Christ Jesus the Lord, that they be careful so to walk in him, and to maintain good works.”

It may not be improper for the minister to give a word of exhortation also to those who have been only spectators, reminding them: “Of their duty, stating their sin and danger, by living in disobedience to Christ, in neglecting this holy ordinance; and calling upon them to be earnest in making pre-

paration for attending upon it at the next time of its celebration.”

Then the minister is to pray and give thanks to God,

“For his rich mercy, and invaluable goodness, vouchsafed to them in that sacred communion; to implore pardon for the defects of the whole service; and to pray for the acceptance of their persons and performances; for the gracious assistance of the Holy Spirit to enable them, as they have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so to walk in him; that they may hold fast that which they have received, that no man take their crown; that their conversation may be as becometh the gospel; that they may bear about with them, continually, the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life also of Jesus may be manifested in their mortal body; that their light may so shine before men, that others, seeing their good works, may glorify their Father who is in heaven.”

An offering for the poor or other sacred purpose is appropriate in connection with this service, and may be made at such time as shall be ordered by the session.

Now let a psalm or hymn be sung, and the congregation dismissed, with the following or some other gospel benediction:

“Now the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great Shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, make you perfect in every good work to do his will, working in you that which is well-pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ; to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen.”

354.—VIII. As it has been customary, in some parts of our church, to observe a fast before the Lord’s supper; to have a sermon on Saturday and Monday; and to invite two or three ministers on such occasions; and as these seasons have been blessed to many souls, and may tend to keep up a stricter union of ministers and congregations, we think it not improper that they who choose it may continue in this practice.

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## CHAPTER XII.

### OF THE SOLEMNIZATION OF MARRIAGE.

355.—I. Marriage is a divine institution, though not a sacrament, nor peculiar to the

church of Christ. It is proper that every commonwealth, for the good of society, make laws to regulate marriage, which all citizens are bound to obey.

356.—II. Christians ought to marry in the Lord; therefore it is fit that their marriage be solemnized by a lawful minister, that special instruction may be given them, and suitable prayers made, when they enter into this relation.

357.—III. Marriage is to be between one man and one woman only; and they are not to be within the degrees of consanguinity or affinity prohibited by the Word of God.

358.—IV. The parties ought to be of such years of discretion as to be capable of making their own choice; and if they be under age, or live with their parents, the consent of the parents or others, under whose care they are, ought to be previously obtained, and well certified to the minister, before he proceeds to solemnize the marriage.

359.—V. Parents ought neither to compel their children to marry contrary to their inclinations, nor deny their consent without just and important reasons.



360.—VI. Marriage is of a public nature. The welfare of civil society, the happiness of families, and the credit of religion, are deeply interested in it. Therefore the purpose of marriage ought to be sufficiently published a proper time previously to the solemnization of it. It is enjoined on all ministers to be careful that, in this matter, they neither transgress the laws of God nor the laws of the community; and that they may not destroy the peace and comfort of families, they must be properly certified with respect to the parties applying to them, that no just objections lie against their marriage.

361.—VII. Marriage must always be performed before a competent number of witnesses, and it is recommended that it be not on the Lord's day. And the Minister is to give a certificate of the marriage when required.

362.—VIII. Let the Minister keep a proper register for the names of all persons whom he marries, and of the time of their marriage, for the perusal of all whom it may concern,

## CHAPTER XIII.

## OF THE VISITATION OF THE SICK.

363.—The miraculous gifts of healing which the Spirit gave to many in the apostles' days are no longer bestowed upon the church; but now, as of old, we are to ask the blessing of God upon all proper means which are employed for the relief of the sick, remembering that the power of the prayer of faith is as great as ever. Hence, when persons are sick, it is their duty, before their strength and understanding fail them, to send for their Minister, or some Elder of the church, and to make known to him, with prudence, their spiritual state; or to consult him on the concerns of their immortal souls. And it is his duty to visit them and to apply himself, with all tenderness and love, to minister to their spiritual good. But, in view of the varying circumstances of the sick, the ordering of the whole service must be left to the discretion of the person who performs it.

## CHAPTER XIV.

### THE BURIAL OF THE DEAD.

364.—I. The exercises proper for such an occasion are: The singing of appropriate psalms or hymns; the reading of some suitable portion or portions of Scripture, with such remarks as it may seem proper to the Minister to make; prayer, in which the bereaved shall be especially remembered, and God's grace sought on their behalf, that their affliction may be blessed to their everlasting good, and that they may be sustained and comforted in their sorrow.

365.—II. These funeral services are to be left largely to the discretion of the Minister performing them; but he should always remember that the proper object of the service is the warning, instruction, or consolation of the living, and be careful to avoid abusing God's word by associating the hopes of the gospel with the close of an irreligious life.

## CHAPTER XV.

## OF DAYS OF FASTING, AND OF THANKSGIVING.

366.—I. There is no day under the gospel commanded to be kept holy, except the Lord's day, which is the Christian Sabbath.

367.—II. Nevertheless, to observe days of fasting and thanksgiving, as the dispensations of Divine Providence may direct, is both scriptural and rational.

368.—III. Fasts and thanksgivings may be observed by individual Christians; or families, in private; by particular congregations; by a number of congregations contiguous to each other; by the congregations under the care of a presbytery, or of a synod; or by all the congregations of our church.

369.—IV. It must be left to the judgment and discretion of every Christian and family to determine when it is proper to observe a private fast or thanksgiving; and to the church Sessions to determine for particular congregations, and to the presbyteries or synods to determine for larger districts.

When it is deemed expedient that a fast or thanksgiving should be general, the call for them must be judged of by the General Assembly. And if at any time the civil power should think it proper to appoint a fast or thanksgiving, it is the duty of the ministers and people of our communion, as we live under a Christian government, to pay all due respect to the same.

370.—V. Public notice is to be given a convenient time before the day of fasting or thanksgiving comes, that persons may so order their temporal affairs that they may properly attend to the duties thereof.

371.—VI. There should be public worship upon all such days; and let the prayers, psalms or hymns; portions of Scripture to be read, and sermons, be all in a special manner adapted to the occasion.

372.—VII. On fast days, let the Minister point out the authority and providences calling to the observance thereof; and let him spend a more than usual portion of time in solemn prayer, particular confession of sin, especially of the sins of the day and place, with their aggravations, which have brought down the judgments of heaven. And let the

whole day be spent in deep humiliation and mourning before God.

373.—VIII. On days of thanksgiving, he is to give the like information respecting the authority and providences which call for the observance of them; and to spend a more than usual part of the time in the giving of thanks, agreeably to the occasion, and in singing psalms or hymns of praise.

It is the duty of the people on these days to rejoice with holy gladness of heart; but let trembling be so joined with their mirth, that no excess or unbecoming levity be indulged.

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## CHAPTER XVI.

### SECRET AND FAMILY WORSHIP.

374.—I. Besides the public worship in the congregations, it is the indispensable duty of each person in secret, and of every family in private, to pray to and worship God.

375.—II. Secret worship is most plainly enjoined by our Lord. In this duty every one, apart, is to spend some time in prayer,

reading the Scriptures, holy meditation, and serious self-examination. The many advantages arising from a conscientious performance of these duties are best known to those who are found in the faithful discharge of them.

376.—III. Family worship, which ought to be performed by every family, ordinarily morning and evening, consists in prayer, reading the Scriptures, and singing praises.

377.—IV. The head of the family, who is to lead in this service ought to be careful that all the members of his household duly attend; and that none withdraw themselves unnecessarily from any part of family worship; and that all refrain from their common business while the Scriptures are read, and gravely attend to the same, no less than when prayer or praise is offered.

378.—V. Let the heads of families be careful to instruct their children and servants in the principles of religion. Every proper opportunity ought to be embraced for such instruction. Therefore the paying of unnecessary private visits on the Lord's day; admitting strangers into the families except when necessary or charity requires

it; or any other practices, whatever plausible pretences may be offered in their favor, are to be highly disapproved if they interfere with the above important and necessary duty.



# OPTIONAL FORMS\*

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## MARRIAGE SERVICE.

*Whether the marriage is in the church or in a private house, the betrothed shall present themselves attended by witnesses, the man having the woman at his left hand, before the Minister, who shall say :*

The Lord bless you, and keep you: the Lord make his face shine upon you, and be gracious unto you: the Lord lift up his countenance upon you, and give you peace.

If any here present can show just cause why these persons may not lawfully be joined together in marriage, let them now speak, or hereafter forever hold their peace.

Marriage is a divine ordinance instituted for the promotion of man's happiness and the glory of God. The sacredness of the relation is revealed by the fact that the Holy Spirit has selected it as an apt emblem of the union existing between our Lord and his

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\*Approved by the General Assembly in 1893, which directed that they be published as an Appendix to the Book of Church Order.

bride, the Church. Hence, beloved friends, take heed to the exhortation of the inspired apostle, "Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the Church, and gave himself for it." "Wives, submit yourselves to your own husbands as unto the Lord." The happiness contemplated by this union is realized only by those who fully appreciate its sacredness and are faithful in the performance of the mutual obligations growing out of it, and seek daily God's blessing.

And now as you enter into this new relation, consecrated by heaven's benediction and hallowed by all that is tenderest and truest in human affection, I entreat you both to join with me in the prayer that God may bless this union, and sanctify it to the furtherance of your good and to the glory of his most holy name.

### THE PRAYER.

Most gracious God, fountain of life and love and joy, look with merciful favor upon these thy servants now to be joined in holy wedlock, and enable them ever to remember and truly keep the vows which they

make as they enter into covenant with one another and with thee, in accordance with thy holy word, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen. Amen.

### THE COVENANT.

*[Here the parties join their right hands, and the minister says:]*

Do you, M., take N., whom you now hold by the hand to be your lawful and wedded wife, and do you promise in the presence of God and these witnesses to be to her a faithful, loving and devoted husband, so long as you both shall live?

*[The man answers "I do."]*

Do you, N., take M., whom you hold by the hand to be your lawful and wedded husband, and do you promise in the presence of God and these witnesses to be to him a faithful, loving and obedient wife, so long as you both shall live?

*[The woman answers, "I do."]*

*[If a ring is given and received, the Minister shall say:]*

Let this ring be the token of your plighted faith, and the memorial of your mutual and unending love.

*[Then the Minister, addressing himself to the company present, says:]*

Forasmuch as these persons have covenanted together in marriage in accordance with the laws of the commonwealth, I do now pronounce them husband and wife, after the ordinance of God. Whom, therefore, God hath joined together, let no man put asunder.

#### THE PRAYER.

Almighty and ever blessed God, our heavenly Father, place the seal of thy loving approval upon the union of these two hearts and lives in the sacred bonds of matrimony. Enable thy servants, by the gift of thy sufficient grace to be faithful in keeping the vows they have now assumed. Whether in prosperity or in adversity, in sickness or in health, in sorrow or in joy, may their love and sympathy for each other never fail. Into thy holy keeping we now commit them, praying that they may ever live "as being heirs together of the grace of life." For Jesus' sake. Amen.

## BENEDICTION.

*[Then the married pair standing, or kneeling, the Minister shall pronounce the benediction:]*

God the Father, God the Son, God the Holy Ghost, bless, preserve, and keep you; the Lord mercifully with his favor look upon you, and so fill you with his grace that you may live faithfully together in this life, and in the world to come may have life everlasting. Amen.

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## A FUNERAL SERVICE.

*[Let the service begin with the reading of the whole or a part of the following selections from Scripture:]*

I am the Resurrection and the Life, saith the Lord; he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: and whosoever liveth and believeth in me, shall never die.

Man that is born of woman is of few days, and full of trouble. He cometh forth like a flower, and is cut down: he fleeth also as a shadow, and continueth not.

For we are strangers before thee, and sojourners, as were all our fathers: our days on the earth are as a shadow, and there is none abiding.

We brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out.

The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away: blessed be the name of the Lord.

#### PRAYER OF INVOCATION.

O God, who are our God, and our fathers' God; thou whose compassions fail not, but who art the same yesterday, today, and forever, grant us now thy presence, we beseech thee, that our souls may be strengthened, and that we faint not under thine afflicting providence, but that through thy condescension we may find all grace to help in this our time of need, which we ask in the name of Jesus Christ, our Lord and Saviour, to whom, with thee and the Holy Ghost, we will ascribe all honor, majesty and might, world without end. Amen.

#### HYMN.

*[Then let the whole or a part of the following selections of Scripture be read:]*

PSALM xxxix. 4-13.

Lord, make me to know mine end, and the measure of my days, what it is; that I may know how frail I am.

Behold, thou hast made my days as a handbreadth; and mine age is as nothing before thee; verily every man at his best state is altogether vanity.

Surely every man walketh in a vain show; surely they are disquieted in vain: he heapeth up riches, and knoweth not who shall gather them.

And now, Lord, what wait I for? my hope is in thee.

Deliver me from all my transgressions: make me not the reproach of the foolish.

I was dumb, I opened not my mouth; because thou didst it.

Remove thy stroke away from me: I am consumed by the blow of thine hand.

When thou with rebukes dost correct man for iniquity, thou makest his beauty to consume away like a moth: surely every man is vanity.

Hear my prayer, O Lord, and give ear unto my cry; hold not thy peace at my tears; for I am a stranger with thee, and a sojourner, as all my fathers were.

O spare me, that I may recover strength, before I go hence, and be no more.

PSALM xc. 1-12.

Lord, thou hast been our dwelling-place in all generations.

Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever thou hadst formed the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting, thou art God.

Thou turnest man to destruction; and sayest, Return, ye children of men.

For a thousand years in thy sight are but as yesterday when it is past, and as a watch in the night.

Thou carriest them away as with a flood; they are as a sleep; in the morning they are like grass which groweth up; in the morning it flourisheth, and groweth up; in the evening it is cut down, and withereth.

For we are consumed by thine anger, and by thy wrath are we troubled.



Thou hast set our iniquities before thee, our secret sins in the light of thy countenance.

For all our days are passed away in thy wrath: we spend our years as a tale that is told.

The days of our years are threescore years and ten; and if by reason of strength they be fourscore years, yet is their strength labor and sorrow; for it is soon cut off, and we fly away.

Who knoweth the power of thine anger? even according to thy ear, so is thy wrath.

So teach us to number our days, that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom.

### I COR. xv. 20-58.

Now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the firstfruits of them that slept. For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive. But every man in his own order: Christ the firstfruits; afterward they that are Christ's at his coming. Then cometh the end, when he shall have delivered

up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when he shall have put down all rule, and all authority and power. For he must reign till he hath put all enemies under his feet. The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death. For he hath put all things under his feet. But when he saith all things are put under him it is manifest that he is excepted which did put all things under him. And when all things shall be subdued unto him, then shall the Son also himself be subject

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*[Instead of the foregoing passage from I Cor xv., one or more of the following may be substituted as the occasion may require:]*

#### ECCLESIASTES xii.

Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth, while the evil days come not, nor the years draw nigh, when thou shalt say, I have no pleasure in them; while the sun, or the light, or the moon, or the stars, be not darkened, nor the clouds return after the rain: in the day when the keepers of the house shall tremble, and the strong men shall bow themselves, and the grinders cease because they are few, and

unto him that put all things under him, that God may be all in all. Else what shall they do which are baptized for the dead, if the dead rise not at all? why are they then baptized for the dead? And why stand we in jeopardy every hour? I protest by your rejoicing which I have in Christ Jesus our Lord, I die daily. If after the manner of men I have fought with beasts at Ephesus, what advantageth it me, if the dead rise not? let us eat and drink; for tomorrow we die. Be not deceived: evil communications cor-

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those that look out of the windows be darkened, and the doors shall be shut in the streets, when the sound of the grinding is low, and he shall rise up at the voice of the bird, and all the daughters of music shall be brought low; also when they shall be afraid of that which is high, and fears shall be in the way, and the almond tree shall flourish, and the grasshopper shall be a burden, and desire shall fail: because man goeth to his long home, and the mourners go about the streets: or ever the silver cord be loosed, or the golden bowl be broken, or the pitcher be broken at the fountain, or the

rupt good manners. Awake to righteousness and sin not; for some have not the knowledge of God: I speak this to your shame.

But some man will say, How are the dead raised up? and with what body do they come? Thou fool, that which thou sowest is not quickened, except it die: and that which thou sowest, thou sowest not that

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wheel broken at the cistern. Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was; and the spirit shall return unto God who gave it.

### PSALM xxvii.

The Lord is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear? the Lord is the strength of my life; of whom shall I be afraid? When the wicked, even mine enemies and my foes, came upon me to eat up my flesh, they stumbled and fell. Though a host should encamp against me, my heart shall not fear: though war should rise against me, in this will I be confident. One thing have I desired of the Lord, that will I seek after; that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to behold the

body that shall be, but bare grain, it may chance of wheat, or of some other grain: but God giveth it a body as it hath pleased him, and to every seed his own body. All flesh is not the same flesh: but there is one kind of flesh of men, another flesh of beasts, another of fishes, and another of birds. There are also celestial bodies, and bodies terrestrial; but the glory of the celestial is one, and the glory of the terrestrial is another. There is one glory of the sun, and another glory of the moon, and another

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beauty of the Lord, and to inquire in his temple. For in the time of trouble he shall hide me in his pavilion; in the secret of his tabernacle shall he hide me; he shall set me up upon a rock. And now shall mine head be lifted up above mine enemies round about me: therefore will I offer in his tabernacle sacrifices of joy; I will sing, yea, I will sing praises unto the Lord. Hear, O Lord, when I cry with my voice: have mercy also upon me, and answer me. When thou saidst, Seek ye my face, my heart said unto thee, thy face, Lord, will I seek. Hide not thy face far from me; put not thy servant away

glory of the stars; for one star differeth from another star in glory. So also is the resurrection of the dead. It is sown in corruption, it is raised in incorruption: it is sown in dishonor, it is raised in glory; it is sown in weakness, it is raised in power: it is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body. There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body. And so it is written, The first man Adam was made a living soul; the last Adam was made a quickening spirit. Howbeit, that was not first

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in anger; thou hast been my help; leave me not, neither forsake me, O God of my salvation. When my father and my mother forsake me, then the Lord will take me up. Teach me thy way, O Lord, and lead me in a plain path, because of mine enemies. Deliver me not over unto the will of mine enemies; for false witnesses are risen up against me, and such as breathe out cruelty. I had fainted, unless I had believed to see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living. Wait on the Lord: be of good courage, and he shall strengthen thine heart; wait, I say, on the Lord.

which is spiritual, but that which is natural; and afterwards that which is spiritual. The first man is of the earth, earthy: the second man is the Lord from heaven. As is the earthy such are they also that are earthy: and as is the heavenly, such are they also that are heavenly. And as we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly.

Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption.

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#### REVELATION xxii 1-5.

And he shewed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb. In the midst of the street of it, and on either side of the river, was there the tree of life, which bear twelve manner of fruits, and yielded her fruit every month: and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations. And there shall be no more curse; but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it, and his servants shall serve him; and they shall see his face; and his name shall be in their foreheads. And

Behold, I show you a mystery: We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory. O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labor is not in vain in the Lord.

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there shall be no night there; and they need no candle, neither light of the sun; for the Lord God giveth them light; and they shall reign for ever and ever.



## PRAYER.

Almighty and most merciful God, our heavenly Father, the consolation of the sorrowful and the support of the stricken, who dost not willingly afflict the children of men, look in pity, we beseech thee, on all upon whom thou hast laid thine afflicting hand, and, in the multitude of thy tender mercies, be pleased to uphold and comfort them in the day of their trial and distress. Grant us all grace that we may lay to heart the lesson of this solemn providence, and work while the day lasteth, knowing that the night cometh, when no man can work; and that we may set our affections on things that are in heaven, and not on things that are on the earth. Enable us to live by faith on the Son of God, that when Christ, who is our life, shall appear, we also may appear with him in glory.

O Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world, to whom shall we go but unto thee? Thou hast the words of eternal life. Thou who wast a Man of Sorrows and acquainted with grief, have pity upon those who cry

unto thee. When our eyes grow dim in the shadows of death, and we pass through the deep waters, by thine agony and bloody sweat, and by thy death on Calvary, we beseech thee to remember us. O thou who hast saved us, forsake us not in the trying hour; thou who hast vanquished death, give us the victory, and bring us to thine own everlasting rest in the assembly of thy saints on high.

O God, the Holy Ghost, author of light and life and truth, inspire our souls with hope through the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, imparting the benefits of his atonement, and the power of his all-sufficient grace. Release us from our sins; fill us with the fruits of thine own indwelling, and form us anew in the image of God. Help us now, O blessed Comforter; heal our wounded spirits and despise not thou our broken and contrite hearts.

O God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost, Triune Jehovah, have mercy upon us, thy servants, as we wait before thee: and hear our prayer. Be pleased graciously to attend to our humble requests, and to do for us all that we need,

glorifying thyself by us both in this present world, and in that which is to come: all of which we ask through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil: For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen.

#### BENEDICTION.

The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost, be with you all. Amen.

*[After which the service may be concluded with a hymn. For service at the grave see page 198.]*

## A CHILD'S FUNERAL.

*[Let the service begin with the reading of the whole or a part of the following selection from Scripture:]*

The Lord hear thee in the day of trouble: the name of the God of Jacob defend thee; send thee help from the sanctuary, and strengthen thee out of Zion.

Man that is born of a woman is of few days, and full of trouble. He cometh forth like a flower, and is cut down; he fleeth also as a shadow, and continueth not.

The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord.

Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.

## PRAYER.

Father of mercies, God of all grace, ever comforting us by the tender assurance of thy love for all those whom thou dost chasten, be near to us now in this hour of sorrow, as we come to cast our care upon thee,

and seek the strength and consolation thou only canst impart.

As a father pitieth his children, so do thou pity those who sit before thee, smitten and afflicted. As one whom his mother comforteth, do thou comfort them, and so sanctify to them this sorrow that theirs may be everlasting consolation.

O thou that leadest Joseph like a flock, who knowest thine own sheep by name as they follow thee, carrying the lambs in thine arms and folding them in thy bosom, it is not thy will that one of these little ones should perish. When thou dost send thy messenger, like a gentle shepherd, to lead them into the heavenly pastures, may bereaved parents hear the voice which says, Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not. Fill them with resignation to thy will; give them the consolations of thy Spirit, and grant that, through thy grace, this chastening may be for their profit, that, being made partakers of thy holiness, they may be prepared for everlasting blessedness in that world where, after the separations and sorrows of this life, they may be for ever with one another and with

the Lord, through the merits and mediation of Jesus Christ, thy Son, our Saviour. Amen.

HYMN.

*The Minister may read the whole or a part of the following selections:*

PSALM xxiii.

The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want. He maketh me to lie down in green pastures: he leadeth me beside the still waters. He restoreth my soul: he leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake. Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me. Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies: thou anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over. Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life; and I will dwell in the house of the Lord for ever.

David therefore besought God for the child; and David fasted, and went in, and lay all night upon the earth. And the elders

of his house arose, and went to him to raise him up from the earth; but he would not, neither did he eat bread with them. And it came to pass on the seventh day, that the child died. And the servants of David feared to tell him that the child was dead: for they said, Behold, while the child was yet alive, we spake unto him, and he would not hearken unto our voice: how will he then vex himself if we tell him that the child is dead?

But when David saw that his servants whispered, David perceived that the child was dead: therefore David said unto his servants, Is the child dead? And they said, He is dead. Then David arose from the earth, and washed, and anointed himself, and changed his apparel, and came into the house of the Lord, and worshipped: then he came to his own house; and when he required, they set bread before him, and he did eat. Then said his servants unto him, What thing is this that thou hast done? thou didst fast and weep for the child while it was alive; but when the child was dead thou didst rise and eat bread. And he said, While the child was yet alive, I fasted and

wept: for I said, who can tell whether God will be gracious to me, that the child may live? But now he is dead, wherefore should I fast? Can I bring him back again? I shall go to him, but he shall not return to me.

I, even I, am he that comforteth you: As one whom his mother comforteth, so will I comfort you.

What I do thou knowest not now; but thou shalt know hereafter.

My son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of him: For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth. If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not? Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous: nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby. Wherefore lift up the hands which hang down, and the feeble knees; For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba,



Father. The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God: and if children, then heirs: heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together. For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.

Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also.

Comfort ye, comfort ye my people, saith your God.

He shall feed his flock like a shepherd; he shall gather the lambs with his arms, and carry them in his bosom.

And they brought young children to him, that he should touch them; and his disciples rebuked those that brought them.

But when Jesus saw it, he was much displeased, and said unto them, Suffer the little

children to come unto me, and forbid them not; for of such is the kingdom of God. Verily I say unto you, Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, he shall not enter therein. And he took them up in his arms, put his hands upon them, and blessed them.

Take heed that ye despise not one of these little ones; for I say unto you, That in heaven their angels do always behold the face of my father which is in heaven.

For the Son of man is come to save that which was lost. How think ye? If a man have a hundred sheep, and one of them be gone astray, doth he not leave the ninety and nine, and goeth into the mountains, and seeketh that which is gone astray? And if so be that he find it, verily I say unto you, he rejoiceth more of that sheep than of the ninety and nine which went not astray. Even so it is not the will of your Father which is in heaven, that one of these little ones should perish.

Therefore are they before the throne of God, and serve him day and night in his temple: and he that sitteth on the throne shall dwell among them. They shall hunger

no more, neither thirst any more; neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat. For the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of water; and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes.

### PRAYER.

O God, our heavenly Father, who through the blood of thy Son hast provided redemption for all thine own, we would render thee most hearty thanks, in this our time of grief, for the sure confidence we have that the soul of this dear child whose loss we mourn is at rest in thee. Not a sparrow falleth to the ground without our Father, and those who are of more value than many sparrows cannot die until thou, who regardest with tender compassion the weakest of thy creatures, dost call them to thyself. We would not sorrow as those who have no hope, but bow in humble submission to thy sovereign decree, and by divine grace would say, Thy will be done.

Vouchsafe unto thy servants, we beseech thee, the consolations of thy Spirit, giving

us beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, and the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness. May this chastisement which now seemeth so grievous yield in us the peaceable fruits of righteousness, by drawing us into closest fellowship with thee, that we may not set our affections on the things of this world, but upon that blessed home above, where all who have departed in Christ await us beyond the reach of sorrow.

Shine upon our darkness, O Lord; pardon all our sins; build us up and strengthen us in our most holy faith; and at last give us the victory over death, bringing us in holiness and joy to thine own eternal rest.

Hear now our prayer, O God, and be pleased mercifully to bestow the blessings which we need, for the love of Jesus Christ, thy well-beloved Son, to whom, with thee and the Holy Ghost, be all dominion, glory and praise, world without end. Amen.

#### LORD'S PRAYER.

Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven.

Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil; For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen.

### BENEDICTION.

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost, be with you all. Amen.

### HYMN.

### AT THE GRAVE.

*[After the body has been lowered into the grave (or the sea), the following words may be said:]*

Forasmuch as it has pleased Almighty God, in his wise providence, to take out of this world the soul of our deceased (*brother*), we therefore commit (*his*) body to the ground; earth to earth, ashes to ashes, dust to dust: awaiting the hour when all who are in their graves shall hear the voice of the Son of God, and shall come forth, "they that have done good, unto the resurrection

of life and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of judgment."

I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died, and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him.

And I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, Write, Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labors; and their works do follow them.

### PRAYER.

Almighty God, who hast sanctified the grave by thy Son's rest therein, and by his glorious resurrection hast brought life and immortality to light, accept, we pray thee, our unfeigned thanks for the victory which he has obtained for us and for all who sleep in him, and keep us who are still in the body, in everlasting fellowship with all that wait for thee on earth, and with all that are around thee in heaven, in union with him who is the resurrection and the life, who

liveth and reigneth with thee and the Holy Ghost, ever one God, world without end. Amen.

O merciful God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who is the resurrection and the life; in whom whosoever believeth, shall live, though he die; and whosoever liveth and believeth in him, shall not die eternally; who also hath taught us, by his holy Apostle Paul, not to be sorry, as men without hope, for those who sleep in him; we humbly beseech thee, O Father, to raise us from the death of sin unto the life of righteousness; that when we shall depart this life, we may rest in him; and that, at the general resurrection in the last day, we may be found acceptable in thy sight; and receive that blessing, which thy well-beloved Son shall then pronounce to all who love and fear thee, saying, Come, ye blessed children of my Father, receive the kingdom prepared for you from the beginning of the world. Grant this, we beseech thee, O merciful Father, through Jesus Christ, our Mediator and Redeemer. Amen.\*

---

\*This prayer is from John Knox's Liturgy.

## BENEDICTION

Now the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great Shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, make you perfect in every good work to do his will, working in you that which is well pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ; to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen.



RULES OF  
PARLIAMENTARY ORDER



# RULES OF PARLIAMENTARY ORDER

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## *Of Opening the Sessions.*

1. The Moderator shall take the chair precisely at the hour to which the court stands adjourned; shall immediately call the members to order; and on the appearance of a quorum, the session shall be opened with prayer.

2. If a quorum be assembled at the hour appointed, and the Moderator be absent, the last Moderator, or oldest Minister present shall take the chair without delay.

3. If a quorum be not assembled at the hour appointed, any two members shall be competent to adjourn from time to time, that an opportunity may be given for a quorum to assemble.

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\*These rules were adopted by the General Assembly of 1866 for its own guidance. As there has been no subsequent action; as several of the lower courts have also adopted them; and as it is important for our judicatories and officers to have some manual on this subject of convenient access, these rules are here published; but, of course, form no part of the Constitution of the church.

4. After calling the roll, and marking the absentees, the minutes of the last sitting shall be read, and, if requisite, corrected.

*Of the Moderator.*

5. It shall be the duty of the Moderator to preserve order, and to conduct all business before the court to a speedy and proper result.

6. He is to propose to the court every subject of deliberation that comes before it.

7. He may propose what appears to him the most regular and direct way of bringing any business to issue.

8. He shall always announce the names of members rising to speak, prevent them from interrupting each other, and require them, in speaking, always to address the chair.

9. He shall prevent a speaker from deviating from the subject, and from using personal reflections.

10. He shall silence those who refuse to observe order.

11. He shall prevent members leaving the court without his permission.

12. He shall, when the deliberations are ended, put the question, and call the vote.

13. In all questions he shall give a clear and concise statement of the object of the vote, and the vote being taken, he shall declare how the question is decided.

14. He shall carefully keep notes of the orders of the day, and call them up at the times appointed.

15. He may speak to points of order in preference to other members, rising from his seat for that purpose, and shall decide questions of order subject to an appeal to the court, without debate, by any two members.

16. If any member consider himself aggrieved by a decision of the Moderator, it shall be his privilege to appeal to the court, and the question on such appeal shall be taken without debate.

17. It is his duty to appoint all committees except in those cases in which the court shall decide otherwise.

18. When a vote is taken by ballot, or by yeas and nays, he shall vote with the other members; in other cases, when the court is equally divided, he shall possess the casting

vote. If he be not willing to decide, he shall put the question a second time, and if the court be again equally divided, and he decline to give his vote, the question shall be lost.

19. He may call any member to the chair, to preside temporarily.

### *Of the Clerk.*

20. As soon as possible after the commencement of the first session of every court, the clerk shall form a complete roll of the members present, and put the same into the hands of the Moderator; and whenever any additional members take their seats, he shall add their names in their proper places to the said roll.

21. He shall immediately file all papers in the order in which they have been read, with proper indorsements, and keep them in perfect order.

### *Of the Order of Business.*

22. After the reading of the minutes of the preceding day, the following order of business shall be observed:

FIRST. The receiving of—

(a) Communications addressed to the body;

(b) Reports of standing committees;

(c) Reports of select committees;

(d) Resolutions; each of which papers may, by unanimous consent, be taken up immediately on presentation, but if objection be made it shall be docketed.

SECONDLY. The unfinished business in which the court was engaged at the last preceding adjournment, in preference to orders of the day; but such unfinished business may, on motion, without debate, be laid on the table, to proceed with the special order.

THIRDLY. As soon as the special order and the unfinished business are disposed of, the business on the docket will be called; but motions to elect officers, to appoint committees, and to enroll members, shall always be in order, unless a member is speaking, or the court is voting.

### *Of Motions.*

23. A motion must be seconded, and afterward repeated by the Moderator, or read

aloud, before it is debated; but this shall be no bar to explanation of the object of any motion by the mover, provided he does not exceed five minutes; and every motion shall be reduced to writing, if the Moderator or any member require it.

24. The mover of a resolution is entitled to the floor if he so desire, after the Moderator has stated the question.

#### *Of Withdrawal of Motions.*

25. Any member who shall have made a motion, shall have liberty to withdraw it, with the consent of his second, before any debate has taken place thereon, but not afterward, without the leave of the court.

#### *Of Limitations of Debate.*

26. Motions to lay on the table, to docket, to take up business, and to adjourn, and the call for the question, shall be put without debate. On questions of order, postponement, or commitment, no member shall speak more than once. On all other questions each member may speak twice, but not oftener, without express leave of the court.



*Of Privileged Questions.*

27. When a question is under debate, no motion shall be received unless to adjourn, to docket, to lay on the table, to amend, to postpone indefinitely, to postpone to a day certain, or to commit; which several motions shall have precedence in the order in which they are herein arranged; and the motion for adjournment shall always be in order.

*Of "the Question."*

28. When any member shall call for "*the question*," the Moderator shall, without debate, put the vote, "Is the court ready for the question?" If the call be seconded by a majority of the members present the vote shall immediately be taken on the pending question, whatever it may be, without further debate.

*Of Division of the Question.*

29. If a motion under debate contains several parts, any two members may have it divided, and a question taken on each part.

*Of Amendments.*

30. An amendment may be moved on any question, as also an amendment to the amendment, which shall be decided before the original proposition; but two distinct amendments to the pending question shall not be entertained at the same time, whether moved as substitutes for the whole matter, or as changing any part thereof.

31. One proposition may be substituted for another, when the substitute covers the whole matter of the original, and this shall be done by moving to strike out the original and to insert the substitute.

*Of Reconsideration.*

32. A question shall not be reconsidered at the same sessions of the court at which it has been decided, unless by the consent of a majority of the members who were present at the decision, and unless the motion to reconsider be made by a person who voted with the majority.

33. A subject which has been indefinitely postponed shall not be again called up dur-

ing the same sessions of the court, unless by the consent of three-fourths of the members who were present at the decision.

### *Of Speakers.*

34. If more than one member rise to speak at the same time, the member who is most distant from the moderator's chair shall speak first.

35. Every member, when speaking, shall address himself to the Moderator, and shall treat his fellow-members, and especially the Moderator, with decorum and respect.

### *Of Interruptions.*

36. No speaker shall be interrupted, unless he be out of order, or for the purpose of correcting mistakes or misrepresentations.

### *Of Voting.*

37. Members shall not decline voting, unless excused by the court.

38. When various motions are made with respect to the filling of blanks with particular numbers or times, the question shall al-

ways be first taken on the highest number and the longest time.

39. When the Moderator has commenced taking the vote, no further debate or remark shall be admitted, unless there has evidently been a mistake; in which case the mistake shall be rectified, and the Moderator shall recommence taking the vote.

40. The yeas and nays on any question shall not be recorded, unless it be required by one-third of the members present; and every member shall vote "yea" or "nay," unless excused by the court. In a judicial case, members thus excused shall not be allowed a vote in any of the subsequent proceedings relating thereto.

41. In all elections it shall require a majority of the votes cast to elect.

### *Of Committees.*

42. The person first named on any committee shall be considered as the chairman thereof, whose duty it shall be to convene the committee and preside therein; and in case of his absence, or inability to act, the second named member shall take his place and perform his duties.

*Of Private Sessions.*

43. All courts have a right to sit in private on business which, in their judgment, ought not to be matter of public speculation.

*Of the Committee of the Whole.*

44. Every court has a right to resolve itself into a committee of the whole, or to hold what are commonly called *interlocutory meetings*, in which members may freely converse together without the formalities necessary in their ordinary proceedings. In all such cases the Moderator shall name the member who is to preside as chairman. If the committee be unable to agree, a motion may be made that the committee rise, and upon the adoption of such motion the Moderator shall resume the chair, and the chairman of the committee shall report what has been done, and ask that the committee be discharged, which being allowed, the matter shall be dropped. If the committee shall agree upon the report to be made, or have made progress in the same without coming to a conclusion, the committee may rise, report what has been done, and if the case

require, may ask leave to sit again; or the committee of the whole may be dissolved, and the question considered by the court in the usual order of business.

### *Of Decorum.*

45. Without express permission, no member of a court, while business is going on, shall engage in private conversation; nor shall members address one another, nor any person present, but through the Moderator.

46. When more than three members of the court shall be standing at the same time, the Moderator shall require all to take their seats, the person only excepted who may be speaking.

47. If any member act in any respect in a disorderly manner, it shall be the privilege of any member, and the duty of the Moderator, to call him to order.

48. No member shall retire from any court without the leave of the Moderator, nor withdraw from it to return home without the consent of the court.

*Of Cases Unprovided for.*

49. All cases that may arise, not provided for in the foregoing rules, shall be governed by the general principles of parliamentary law.

*Of Closing the Sessions.*

50. The Moderator of every court, above the church Session, in finally closing its sessions, in addition to prayer, may cause to be sung an appropriate psalm or hymn, and shall pronounce the apostolic benediction.





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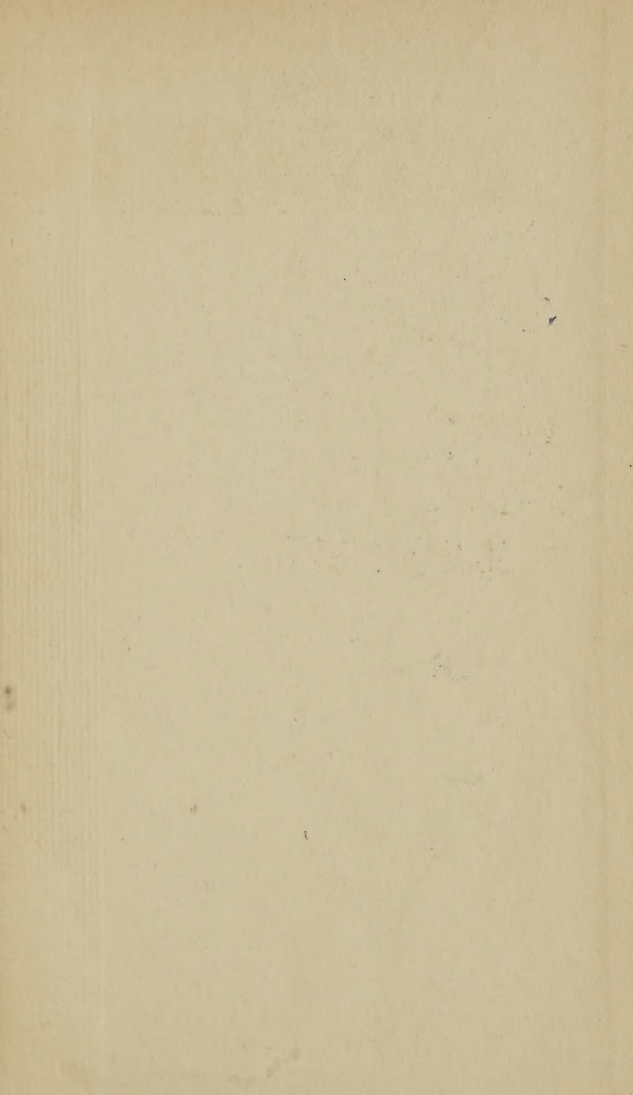
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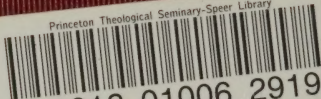
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